



NAVY NEWS

JANUARY 2015



WINTER THOR

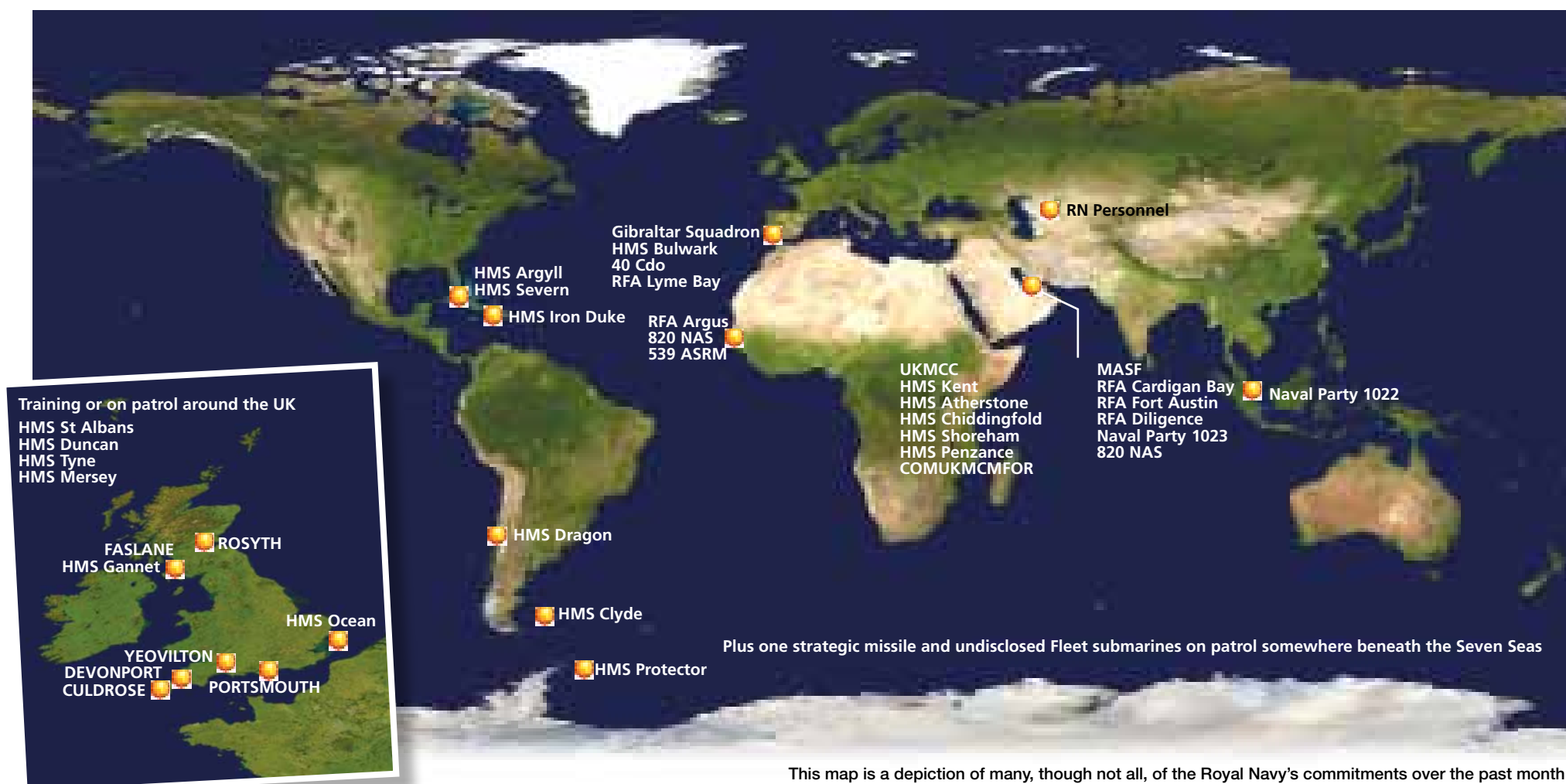
● A Viking armoured vehicle makes its way onto a beach in Gibraltar as Royal Marines from HMS Bulwark take part in Exercise Sea Snake at the end of their Cougar 14 deployment. See page 16.

Picture: Cpl Scott Robertson, RAF



Off-sale date: February 1, 2015

£3.00



This map is a depiction of many, though not all, of the Royal Navy's commitments over the past month

FLEET FOCUS

Protecting our nation's interests

THE new year begins with the spotlight on **HMS Protector** as she battled an ice field to reach Brabant Island in the Antarctic for a special mission (see centre pages). The ice patrol ship cleared recently-rediscovered items left by a British expedition 30 years ago.

RFA Argus has continued her mission in Sierra Leone, where Royal Navy helicopters have flown more than 10,000 miles across the country in the fight against Ebola (see page 5).

Also hitting the headlines is **HMS Argyl**, which added to its tally of drugs seizures after a high-speed dash in the Caribbean by its contingent of Royal Marines (see page 6).

HMS Bulwark made her journey home to the UK after her four-month Cougar 14 deployment – calling in at Gibraltar where the ship's Royal Marines stormed a beach (see page 16).

Marines from **40 Commando** have been taking part in the final stages of the five-week Exercise Jebel Dagger in the Jordanian Desert (see page 4), while closer to home **HMS Albion** is awakening from its three-year slumber to prepare for her role as the nation's flagship in April 2017 (see page 6).

There were emotional scenes in the South West as family and friends gathered at Devonport to welcome back their loved ones aboard **HMS Northumberland** following the frigate's seven-month deployment in the Indian Ocean (see page 7), while at RNAS Yeovilton the crew of Lynx flight 215 from **815NAS** returned from their seven months in the Gulf and Indian Ocean (see page 7).

First Sea Lord Admiral Sir George Zambellas has challenged academics, scientists, technology firms, plus British and Allied military forces to show off hi-tech systems which could revolutionise Naval warfare (see page 6). The best inventions will be invited to take part in the first Royal Navy 'robot wars'.

Inspiring sailors of the future was one of the key themes for **HMS St Albans** as she paid a week-long visit to London (see page 8). Meanwhile **HMS Iron Duke's** medical team worked in a hospital in Haiti during the ship's historic visit to the Caribbean country (see page 9).

Weapon and marine engineers from **HMS Kent** were invited behind the scenes by F1 team Red Bull during the Portsmouth-based frigate's visit to Abu Dhabi (see page 10).

Senior rates from across the **Submarine Service** descended on HMS Raleigh for an advanced fire-fighting course. The base's damage control school features mock-ups of a galley, bunk and mess decks, engine and manoeuvring room, plus hatches and ladders (see page 10).

Remembering those who made the ultimate sacrifice continued as the crew of **HMS Bulwark** held a memorial service in the Mediterranean to mark the 100th anniversary of the demise of the ship's namesake in WW1 (see pages 14-15). A service was also held at Navy Command on **HMS Excellent**. In Edinburgh sailors joined dignitaries as the first memorial stone for the first Royal Navy VC of the war was unveiled (see page 15).

A year after our first visit, Navy News returned to a new £1m training facility at **HMS Raleigh** (see page 18). Dubbed 'ship in a box' and now officially named **MV Vindictive**, it's being used to prepare board-and-search teams for front-line duties around the globe.

The Sea Cadets bid an emotional farewell to their flagship **TS Royalist** as she sailed into Portsmouth for the final time (see page 29).

Finally, Commonwealth gold medal-winning Royal Marine judo star Chris Sherrington was named Sportsman of the Year 2014 at the annual **Royal Navy Sports Awards** (see page 39).



All go on the O

THERE were three Lynx, some Baggers, Apaches, a Chinook and the Ace of Clubs.

What a cracking example of tri-Service interoperability.

And they were all aboard HMS Ocean. At the same time. Off the South Coast. And shores of East Anglia.

The final stages of the Mighty O's autumn work-up saw a couple of weeks of intensive flying serials with most – though not all, for the Junglie Sea Kings and Merlins weren't playing – of the helicopters which will be flying on and off the carrier's 667ft deck.

After the delights of a short stint in the Med supporting the Cougar amphibious deployment, the Devonport-based ship's Operational Sea Training concluded in much greyer and cooler home waters.

She hosted Lynx of 815 Naval Air Squadron, red and grey Sea King Mk5s of 771 NAS and grey Mk7s Airborne Surveillance and Control models, plus RAF Chinooks and Army Air Corps Apaches – from their base at Wattisham near Ipswich.

For the 29-strong engineering team from 849 NAS Normandy Flight the five days on the Mighty O were less about maintaining their Sea Kings than getting used to living and working at sea.

The Baggers spent five years continuously on operations over Afghanistan before returning to Culdrose over the summer, since when they've been getting their sea legs back so they can deploy on ships east

of Suez, where the Sea Kings are currently operating off the back of Royal Fleet Auxiliary ships.

With Ocean's deck abuzz with so many aircraft – and with a lot of junior rates, especially those at the able seaman level, having spent little, if any, time at sea, the short stint on the helicopter carrier was an eye-opener.

"For a lot of the guys, it was a shock to the system. It's a bit like taking your first driving lesson in a Formula 1 car," explained Normandy Flight's air engineer officer Lt Chris Hillard.

"But it was also an invaluable experience with a lot of lessons learned. Some of them were the Billy basics – how long does it take to get from your mess to the flight deck, for example.

"Conditions in Afghanistan were basic but not bad. Living at sea you've got small beds, it's cool in the mess, there's no WiFi – all simple things, but you need to get used to them.

"We're getting the Bagger world out of the desert mentality and back to being the eyes of the Fleet again ready for the Queen Elizabeth."

Reward for the 849 chaps and chapesses was a return to dry land in Cornwall. Reward for Team Ocean was a few days in (a rather cold) Amsterdam before returning to Devonport for Christmas leave.

Picture: LA(Phot) Alex Knott, RNPOTY

Accolades for military heroes

THE outstanding achievements of the Armed Forces were celebrated at the seventh annual Sun Military Awards (The Millies), organised by *The Sun* newspaper in collaboration with the Ministry of Defence.

Three awards went to Royal Naval and Royal Marine personnel – Hero Abroad, Life savers and Fire Fight with two nominees in the Home Front Hero and Support to Armed Forces categories.

The former CO of HMS Illustrious Capt Mike Utley received the Hero Abroad award on behalf of all those who assisted the Philippines over Christmas 2013 after her islands were devastated by Typhoon Haiyan.

HMS Daring was first on the scene and was followed up by HMS Illustrious with thousands of tonnes of UK aid donated by the British public.

He said: "I was delighted to accept this award on behalf of all who served in HMS Illustrious during the disaster-relief mission in the Philippines.

"HMS Illustrious served the country for 32 years in a wide range of operations all over the world.

"It is a privilege to have been her final Commanding Officer and a great honour for all of us to be recognised at the Millies."

Col Ewen Murchison, who was the Commanding Officer of 42 Commando during Op Herrick 14 in Afghanistan, accepted the Fire Fight award – a new category that recognises personnel involved with the period of intense fighting on the front line.

Col Murchison, who won the Best Unit award at the 2011 Millies, said: "I think it's a really good opportunity, at the end of Afghanistan to all come together and celebrate what we achieved there.

"It's been a massive collective effort – this is not about one unit, this is not about one individual, this was a team effort on the front line in Afghanistan."

Officer Cadet and RN reservist at HMS King Alfred in Portsmouth Michelle Ping, who won a Millie in 2011 after her work in Afghanistan, picked up the Life Savers award on behalf of all of her fellow Naval Service medics and evacuation teams.



Rest in peace in the Pacific

THE brilliant blue skies and distant shoreline blurred by the summer haze belie the naval tragedy played out here a century ago.

This is Coronel, a dozen or so miles off the coast of Chile, scene of the biggest blow to the Royal Navy's prestige in more than 100 years.

In the fading light of the first day of November 1914, Rear Admiral Christopher Cradock and his squadron offered battle against a superior German force led by Admiral Graf Spee.

In little more than two hours of battle, Cradock, his flagship HMS Good Hope, the cruiser HMS Monmouth and 1,570 souls went to the bottom of the Pacific. Graf Spee's squadron suffered just three men wounded.

One hundred years on and Type 45 destroyer HMS Dragon and Chilean frigate CNS Almirante Cochrane paused over the last resting place of the two sunken warships.

Aboard the Cochrane – formerly HMS Norfolk – were the heads of the Chilean, Royal and Royal Canadian Navies – Almirante Enrique Larrañaga Martin, First Sea Lord Admiral Sir George Zambellas and Vice Admiral Mark Norman – plus German Flotilla Admiral Karl-Wilhelm Ohlms. Each cast a wreath into the Pacific to remember those who were lost.

For the head of the Royal Navy, attending commemorations in the Pacific was not merely a matter of respect for the sailors who died, but also a reminder that the Great War was “also fought at sea, far away from the mud, barbed wire and trenches of the Western Front.”

Admiral Zambellas continued: “The sea battles off Coronel and the Falkland Islands were a sharp wake-up call right at the start of WW1, with nothing less at stake than Great Britain's credibility as the dominant global maritime power.”

Perhaps little known in Britain is Canada's sacrifice at Coronel.

Four midshipmen – all aged 19 or 20 – went down with the Good Hope (she sank with all hands), the first losses not just of the Royal Canadian Navy in the Great War, but of the entire nation.

“These sailors lived the traditional Naval answer to the call of duty – ‘Ready, Aye Ready’ – and their conduct and valour continues to inspire today's generation,” said Admiral Norman.

With the wreaths drifting gently in the Pacific, Dragon set course north for the port of Valparaíso – where Graf Spee was hailed a hero after defeating Cradock in 1914.

The Portsmouth-based

destroyer spent three days in the port, berthed next to another former Royal Navy frigate, CNS Almirante Williams (previously HMS Sheffield), to take part in the Exponaval exhibition – South America's largest showcase for warships and Naval systems.

Throughout the exposition, HMS Dragon flew the flag both for her Navy and her nation, allowing UK firms to show off the best of British industry. They also laid on a demonstration to the Chilean Navy and VIPs, including the UK's Ambassador to Santiago Fiona Clouder, of what the UK's most advanced warship and her 200 sailors can do.

Ms Clouder was full of praise for Dragon calling her “a beautiful ship, sleek in design, advanced in its technology.”

She added: “What struck me are also the values of her crew – commitment, courage, discipline, respect, integrity and loyalty – qualities also of the Chilean Navy.”

For Admiral Zambellas, Dragon's participation in Exponaval, and the joint act of commemoration for the men of Coronel were symbolic of the two Navies' centuries-old bond.

“Our ties remain close today, as HMS Dragon's support to Exponaval demonstrates, and we were especially proud to be part of the commemoration to remember the Battle of Coronel, alongside representatives of Germany, Canada and Chile,” he added.

“As our Navies modernise, we are exploring new and exciting opportunities in partnership. By sharing ambition, knowledge and technology, we can deepen and strengthen our multinational maritime partnership further still.”

As well as events at Coronel, HMS Dragon's sailors formed a guard of honour at the monument to the Battle of Iquique – which is to the Chilean Navy what Trafalgar is to the Royal Navy – as their Commanding Officer Capt Rex Cox laid a wreath in the form of a Union Flag.

And there was a wreath laying for HMS Dragon's own family: the captain of the previous Dragon, a World War 1-era cruiser, died while leading the ship on a tour of South America in 1930. Captain Louis Horatio Beckford Bevan is one of several British sailors whose grave in Valparaíso is now crowned with a decoration from today's HMS Dragon.

“It was an honour and

privilege to be invited to Valparaíso by the Chilean Navy, to commemorate the Battle of Coronel and remember the almost 1,600 sailors who lost their lives 100 years ago, and to be centre-stage at Latin America's largest naval exhibition,” said Capt Cox.

For his fateful encounter with Graf Spee, Christopher Cradock rounded Cape Horn. Capt Cox took his man o'war through the Cordillera Central courtesy of the Panama Canal (opened just a fortnight after the world war broke out in 1914).

Dragon was one of three Naval Service ships using the path between the oceans in as many days – HMS Iron Duke heading east on her way home, D35 and tanker RFA Gold Rover bound for the Pacific from the Caribbean.

Compared with the enormous flat-bottomed container ships which normally use the 82-kilometre waterway (about 40 ships a day, upwards of 15,000 a year, four per cent of all global shipping trade...) navigating the canal can be a challenge for RN warships and auxiliaries.

Gold Rover's CO Capt Shaun Jones RFA has taken ships through the manmade water on four occasions.

“No matter how many times you complete the transit, it is always an exciting and challenging time for the

bridge team and seamanship departments,” he said.

“It's also a long day – our entry started at 4am and ended at around 7pm. It's great fun and with some great views as you make your way through the three locks. I hope the first-timers amongst the three ships really enjoyed it.”

As well as the intricacies of guiding a £1bn warship through the canal, Dragon also found herself under the media spotlight.

A 17-strong film crew joined the ship to record elements for what will be the RN's new recruitment advertising campaign for the next three years.

The ad folk filmed away merrily as Dragon put her sea boats in the water and Lynx helicopter aloft and also recorded various aspects of seamanship for the campaign which is due to be on screens this month.

And like all canal transits, the ship's company took the opportunity (sometimes in the tropical rain) to ‘Row The Panama’.

With a nine-strong Royal Marines' detachment aboard as well as the film crew, competition was fierce as various departments sought the fastest time – and most money raised for the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity.

Pictures: LA(Phot) Rhys O'Leary



T26s look to nearly 2060

THE Navy's next-generation frigates – the Type 26 'global combat ship' – will become the backbone of the Fleet into the second half of the 21st Century.

The last of the 13 ships planned in the class as a one-for-one replacement for today's Type 23 frigates is due to be in service until the end of the 2050s.

In an update on progress with the design of the successor to the Duke class, Defence Secretary Michael Fallon has told MPs on the Defence Select Committee that the future warships are being designed with a 25-year lifespan in mind.

From the outset – unlike Type 45 destroyers – the 26s will be fitted with a 24-cell vertical missile silo to carry cruise, anti-ship or anti-submarine missiles or rockets.

There will be 48 Sea Ceptor missiles to provide air defence – not just for the ship but also neighbouring vessels in a group.

On the gunnery front, a 5in – rather than the RN's long-standing 4.5in – will be the main punch, supported by two 30mm cannons and two automated Phalanx as a last line of defence against incoming air or fast surface craft attack.

Although the Merlin or Wildcat helicopter will be the new ship's principal aerial battlewagon, it will be able to take a Chinook – with its ramp down for troop embarkation – as well as any pilotless aircraft in which the Fleet Air Arm decides to invest.

Key to what Mr Fallon calls a "truly mission-tuneable" vessel will be the 'adaptable mission bay' next to the hangar, which can be equipped or kitted out depending on whatever of 17 different kinds of deployments a Type 26 could be sent on.

The bay will be large enough to hold four 12-metre boats (considerably larger than RN Pacific 24 RIBs or Royal Marines ORCs), unmanned air, surface and submarine vehicles, disaster relief stores, medical facilities, and command and control centre or ten 20ft ISO containers.

■ The bow sonar on Type 23 frigates is to receive a £27m revamp over the next decade.

Ultra Electronics' Sonar Systems arm has clinched a ten-year deal with the MOD to deliver and support new hull-mounted sonars – Sonar 2050 – as part of a 'technology refresh programme'.



Pictures: LA(Phot) Will Haigh, 40 Cdo

JEBELS WITH A CAUSE

WITH gunsmoke swirling across the almost featureless terrain of the Jordanian Desert, the men of Charlie Company, 40 Commando, quickly shift position amid live-firing training.

The green berets and their counterparts from Jordanian 77 Marine Battalion swarmed through the desert during the final stages of the five-week Exercise Jebel Dagger – by far the longest and most wide-ranging workout on land of the Norton Manor men's autumn deployment.

40 – currently the UK's lead commando group, ready to deploy to respond to global events – sailed with the Cougar 14 task force on its annual exercises, this year to the Mediterranean and Middle East.

In Jordan, the bulk of the unit left the ships behind for a series of exercises with the host nation, including live-fire shoots, vertical assaults from helicopters, vehicle assaults, and a spot of top bombing with 81mm mortar rounds hammering down on 'enemy' positions at 500mph.

The final exercise was a combined British and Jordanian assault on a mock 'terrorist camp' using helicopters, armoured vehicles and heavy artillery.

This climactic set-piece was observed by Prince Feisal Bin Al Hussein – brother of Jordan's King Abdullah II and Deputy Supreme Commander of the country's armed forces – the UK's ambassador Peter Millett and 3 Commando Brigade's CO Brig Charlie Stickland.

The latter said that Jebel Dagger had seen his and Jordanian marines working side-by-side "more than ever before; fusing our recce troops and integrating a platoon of Jordanians into each Royal Marines rifle company."

Jebel is not the only Dagger wielded by 40 on Cougar. Shortly before storming through Jordan, the commandos were doing likewise in

the similarly barren sands of southern Bahrain – this time involving more than 100 green berets from Bravo Company for three weeks.

As well as the Brits, Pearl Dagger drew on the ranks of the Bahraini National Guard, Bahraini Marines and the US Marine Corps' Fleet Anti-Terrorism Security Team.

Together they ran through the gamut of marine operations, everything from typical infantry manoeuvres and marksmanship, to demolitions, dealing with casualties, abseiling, live firing, the use of heavy weapons – such as mortars – and amphibious landings.

The workout reached its climax with an assault on an oil installation 'hijacked' by terrorists.

"The professional manner in which they aggressively attacked the 'enemy' demonstrated that both the Bahraini and British Marines had listened to the coaching and guidance delivered by their instructors," said Major Joe Winch, Officer Commanding Bravo Company.

"I was not surprised, though. Both my men and the Bahraini Marines had shown a real thirst and enthusiasm to learn from the experience. I am confident that both our countries have benefitted from this experience and I hope we can work and train together in the future."

Bravo are 40's 'fly forward' unit – the very tip of the spear, flown into battle ahead of the main force.

"It's great to have opportunities to train with one of our key partners in the region – and our US Marine Corps brothers, of course," said Maj Winch.

"The company has had a great time; we were hosted brilliantly by the Bahrain National Guard and conducted some high-quality training, sharing expertise and experiences, and further cementing the relationships between our forces."



Grimsby ends NATO mission

HOPEFULLY home safely as you read this after her 7,648 nautical miles away from Faslane on NATO duties should be HMS Grimsby, due back on the Clyde on the cusp of Christmas.

The Sandown-class ship spent the autumn of 2014 attached to the international force's Standing Mine Countermeasures Group 2 in and around the Middle Sea.

Her NATO tasking saw her work under the Italians with vessels from Spain, Germany, Greece, Bulgaria and Turkey in waters from the shores of Asia Minor to Morocco.

The last major act of Grimsby's involvement with the group was her participation in Exercise Nusret, the annual mine warfare exercise run by the Turks, which in 2014 was staged in the Gulf of Izmir (*in which Grimsby is pictured above*).

Grimsby parted company with the group in early December and was dashing (as much as a minehunter can dash) across Biscay to avoid winter storms rolling across the Atlantic and battering Western Europe.

Medics share front-line tips

MEDICS from the Royal Navy joined their counterparts from the Army and RAF at a two-day conference discussing lessons learned from Operation Herrick.

More than 200 personnel at Exercise Triple Serpent, which took place at Defence Medical Services at Whittington near Lichfield, heard from a range of speakers, including Maj Gen Patric Godart, the deputy Surgeon General of France, and veterans' minister Anna Soubry.

Maj Gen Godart described the experience of French Forces in Mali while Ms Soubry concluded that the future of defence medical services was to continue to lead the way in medical innovation and give Servicemen and women the world-beating care they expect and deserve.



End of the Adventure for Defender



FOLLOW the leader... the leader being super-carrier USS Carl Vinson cutting through the Arabian Sea.

Behind her HMS Defender and French frigate FS Jean Bart with American cruiser USS Bunker Hill bringing up the rear.

The Type 45 destroyer slotted into the battle group of the American flat-top in one of her last operational acts of her maiden deployment.

After the first half of her six-month tour of duty was devoted to working with the UK's allies in the Gulf region, the final three months

of the Portsmouth-based warship's opening patrol were mostly spent supporting the campaign against Islamic State militants.

Initially, the destroyer was attached to the USS George H W Bush task group providing 'umbrella' air defence for the carrier and her escorts – Defender's raison d'être.

Since the Bush left theatre, the Carl Vinson strike group has inherited responsibility for supporting Operation Inherent Resolve, as well as wider maritime security operations in the Middle East.

Readers with a magnifying glass might be able to make out a small grey blob on Defender's flight deck.

That's Miss Adventure, the destroyer's Mk8 Lynx provided by 815 NAS in Yeovilton.

As Defender's deployment drew to a close, the helicopter celebrated its 35th birthday – and possibly her last as the Lynx force switches to the Wildcat (due to make its first operational deployment this year).

Miss Adventure began life as a Lynx Mk2, took part in operations in Northern Ireland and the Falklands

conflict in 1982.

Transformed into the final version of the Lynx, the Mk8 SRU (Saturn Radio Upgrade), most recently she was on the back of HMS Westminster east of Suez, clocking up 400 hours on courier-narcotic/drugs patrols.

On this Kipion deployment she's been working closely with the Bush and Vinson, as well as other Allied vessels in the area, helping with force protection, surveillance, and logistics support.

She's cared for by the ten members of 217 Flight – three aircrew, seven

maintainers – who've worked around the clock during the deployment to maintain a high level of readiness for whatever tasking is given at a moment's notice.

"She may be an old girl, but with some tender loving care she has done us proud," said Senior Maintenance Rating CPO Cliff 'Fred' Bassett.

He and his 'old girl' were due back in Yeovilton – and their mother ship due back in Portsmouth – the day after Navy News rolled off the presses.

Picture: US Fifth Fleet

Do you deliver?

YES, yes we do.

In spades. To the shoreline. To islands. To dropzones. To landing sites. To coastal communities. To inaccessible villages on the edge of the mountains.

By sea and air, the Navy's warriors in the fight against Ebola have covered the length and breadth of Sierra Leone to help its people.

Literally thousands of the West African country's inhabitants have the men and women of Operation Gritrock to thank for small, but vital inroads, into the disease's progress on the continent.

Last month – when RFA Argus had just arrived in Freetown – the three Merlins she carried were hailed as 'game changers'.

And how. In the first four weeks, the helicopters flew more than 10,000 miles delivering aid to areas beyond the reach of aid agencies on the ground.

But game-changing isn't reserved to Argus' Merlins.

Most recently the merit of dispatching the auxiliary with a clutch of Royal Marines' vessels (plus commandos) – two landing craft, five small boats – also paid dividends.

Communities in the Turtle and neighbouring Sherbro Islands – about 60 miles south of the Sierra Leone capital – had become all but cut-off from the rest of the country since the beginning of the Ebola crisis.

Normally islanders trade the fish they catch with people on the mainland – bringing back food for their families.

Due to the outbreak, however, such trade had ground to a halt – and by mid-December the chain of islands' food supply was running low.

Now, however, more than 16,000 people have food for a month thanks to a three-day mission by Britain's Armed Forces.

Soldiers, sailors and Royal Marines carried scores of food sacks ashore from landing craft, while the helicopters delivered more than 150 tonnes of food inland, where sailors and RAF personnel set up makeshift drop sites.

LA(SE) Dave Jackson of the Merlins' 820 Naval Air Squadron helped co-ordinate efforts by the local populace to stockpile the aid delivered to Yele Island and the village of Tissana, ensuring that it was protected from the elements in schoolhouses.

"These couple of days were the best and the most rewarding that I've had in the Royal Navy," he said.

"It was a fantastic experience to be able to

work side by side with the people who will benefit from this aid. Storing it centrally will allow the food to be distributed to those who need it."

Also assisting at the dropzones was Cpl Lee Overend of the RAF's Tactical Support Wing. "The Merlin's downwash is considerable," he said. "It was really important to ensure that the excited locals did not get too close to the drop sites when the aircraft were coming in."

"We had a long, hot, hard day's work but it was amazing to see how important this aid is to the people who live here."

The Merlins found themselves delivering the bulk of the supplies rather than the landing craft as unfavourable tides and numerous sandbars in mostly unmapped waters meant sailing in at such short notice was a challenge.

The three helicopters clocked up 42 flying hours as part of the aid mission – codenamed Operation Herring – delivering 314 half-tonne sacks, each one containing enough food to support eight households for four weeks.

Mark Warne-Smith, civilian-military liaison officer for the World Food Programme, said the island mission had been "very successful".

He continued: "We've all appreciated the warm welcome – at every island there was a large crowd of enthusiastic people to help lift the food ashore and a lot of smiles from the locals."

"These islands have not been able to trade with the mainland – normally they would take their fish to market and bring food back. Because they've been isolated, the islands have been suffering from a lack of food."

Mark said he had been struck by "the incredible level of co-operation and goodwill" shown by Britain's military personnel in helping the UN programme.

"The speed and success of Operation Herring is due to the positive attitude and good faith of the guys and girls on the ship, in the air and on the ground. I have enjoyed my time working here immensely and know that we can continue to deliver such good work for the people of Sierra Leone."

This was the second time Operation Gritrock – the name for the overarching British military effort to stem the tide of Ebola in Sierra Leone – had supported the World Food Programme's efforts.

The tiny community of Kumala on the edge of the Lorna Mountains is just 130 miles from the capital Freetown – but inaccessible to trucks.

A 28-bed care centre has been established to look after the people of the Neini chiefdom, but the staff from the UN agencies – and other non-government organisations such as the World Health Organisation, UNICEF and Oxfam – needed safe accommodation so they could continue the battle against Ebola in the area.

Enter the Merlins, which achieved in two days and six sorties what would have taken trucks on the ground a couple of weeks, flying in five and a half tonnes of equipment.

"The squadron is really delivering everything asked of us," said Cdr Ross Spooner, the squadron's Commanding Officer.

"The response from the people of Sierra Leone continues to amaze, with the aircraft generating huge crowds wherever we land."

"The focus and commitment of personnel and many non-government organisations who are on the front line of the fight against Ebola in remote and isolated sites is extremely humbling and fully deserving of all the support we can provide."

Aircrewman WO1 Jay O'Donnell said the Sierra Leone deployment had put a strain on both men and machines.

"The aircraft themselves also suffer in the heat – the gas turbine engines do not give as much power, and the rotor blades do not generate as much lift in hot conditions as they do in cold," he explained.

"It means the helicopters cannot lift as much weight – stores, people or fuel."

To get around the problem, the squadron's engineers have stripped the Merlins down to the bare bones, whilst making sure the helicopters can still safely operate in and out of the landing sites and confined areas which they need to visit.

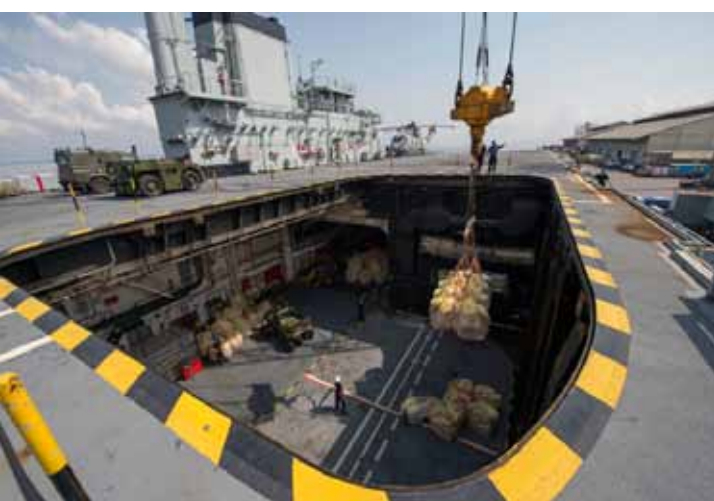
Temperatures in Argus' hangar have been nudging 40°C – and with humidity at 95 per cent, 820's engineers have been pushing their physical boundaries.

They are working eight-hour shifts, making sure one Merlin is always available for daily duties and another is ready to scramble at 30 minutes' notice.

Aircrew usually fly at least six hours in the heat every day they are on duty – but it can rise to eight in the event of a particularly important or pressing mission.

"For 820 Naval Air Squadron in particular, the sheer effort, enthusiasm and overall commitment to this mission have been absolutely outstanding," said Cdr Spooner.

"The whole team should be justifiably proud of what they have achieved."





The Royal Naval Benevolent Trust

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Bombed-up Lightnings take to the skies

THIS is the Navy's next-generation strike fighter fully bombed-up in flight for the first time.

High above Chesapeake Bay, just 50 miles outside the US capital, two of Britain's F35 Lightning IIs performed nine test flights carrying ASRAAM air-to-air missiles and Paveway IV laser-guided bombs.

Both are proven weapons – RAF Typhoons are equipped with ASRAAM, while the Paveway, which was carried by RN Harrier pilots in Afghanistan, is currently being used by the Air Force against Islamic State targets.

But neither weapon had been loaded on to an F35B – the jump-jet variant of the stealth fighter-bomber – to see how the extra weight and shape of the weapons would affect the aircraft's performance.

So dummy rounds – identical in form and weight to their live counterparts – were loaded on the jets by Fleet Air Arm and RAF technicians at Pax River air base in Maryland, one of several sites across the Pond where Britons are working side-by-side with the American military to bring the hi-tech Lightning II into service.

Billie Flynn, test pilot for Lockheed Martin – the F35's builder – and RAF Sqn Ldr Andy Edgell took to the skies with different configurations of both weapons types on the aircraft to see how the aircraft handled.

"The team at Pax River has got over 2,000 hours of flying under their belts for the F35B variant and the handling and performance of the aircraft has shone through throughout," said Pete 'Wizzer' Wilson, a lieutenant

commander in the RNR and chief F35 test pilot for BAE Systems, who are developing around one sixth of the new aircraft with Lockheed.

"These latest trials were no exception and help us to move confidently into the next phase of weapons testing."

The successful handling tests will be followed early this year by weapon separation and the guided release of both the ASRAAM and Paveway IV from the British F35s.

As well as the trials models which are undergoing extensive testing in the USA, the MOD has ordered the first four of 14 production models for front-line service.

The first Lightning II trials from the deck of Queen Elizabeth will be in 2018 with the new aircraft fully operational two years later.

Picture: Layne Laughter/Lockheed Martin

A comeback for not any old lion

THE lion is awakening from its three-year slumber as work begins to turn HMS Albion into the nation's future flagship.

The assault ship has been in extended readiness since 2011 in her home base of Devonport, while her sister HMS Bulwark – currently leading the Navy's annual amphibious Cougar deployment in the Mediterranean – has served as flagship.

Come April 2017, the two ships' roles will be reversed as Bulwark is laid up and Albion takes her place on the right of the line.

A small group of sailors has been responsible for looking after Albion while she's been berthed in one of Devonport's basins.

But it will still take two and a half years to bring the 19,000-tonne assault ship fully back to life – initially courtesy of a 60-strong team of ship's company, reservists and specialist marine engineer technicians from defence firm Babcock.

They began that Herculean task by carefully moving the ship into No.10 Dock to inspect the hull – the very first stage of any refit, and of Albion's regeneration.

Although marine growth had attached itself to the 577ft hull, so good was the original paint scheme applied to the ship that a high-pressure wash removed it "in a jiffy".

Other elements of the refit package planned for Albion will prove rather more demanding – computer, weapons, radar and command systems will need upgrading to keep pace with developments while the ship has been out of action. Her engines and propulsion system will be given a full overhaul, as will the accommodation spaces and messes for more than 300 sailors, plus over 400 Royal Marines when deployed.

Cdr Steve Ward, the ship's Senior Naval Officer, said his team found the ship "in surprisingly good nick" when they stepped aboard to begin Albion's rejuvenation.

"The first impression was very much like stepping onboard any Royal Navy warship – the core team has done a good job of keeping the patient alive these past few three years," he added.

"We're undaunted by the rollercoaster ride that is invariably associated with the maintenance period for any capital ship. All of us – MOD, Babcock and ship's company – are raring to go and up for the challenge."



Gotcha – again

SPREAD-eagled over the bow of their speed boat, this is the moment two suspected drug-runners are arrested – after Royal Marines snipers brought their high-speed dash across the Caribbean to an end.

And thus did HMS Argyll snare £9m of cocaine after the commandos shot out the engines on this 'go-fast' after it tried – and failed – to out run the frigate's Lynx helicopter.

Six bales of drugs were hauled out of the sea – 215kg of cocaine in all, bringing the ship's tally on her six-month Atlantic deployment to just shy of two tonnes of illegal narcotics worth more than £75m.

Lynx pilot Lt Jonny Hamlyn said with a top speed of 180kts, his helicopter didn't have trouble keeping pace with the speed boat – but consummate skill was needed to bring the smugglers' to a halt.

"I had to work hard to keep the helicopter in the right place for the sniper team and for us to successfully disable the go-fast was a great team effort," he added.

The commandos drilled rounds from their .5 calibre sniper rifle into the go-fast's three engines, bringing it to a halt – and allowing a US Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment to board and detain the two crew.

While the runners were waiting to be boarded – and despite a 4,500-tonne warship bearing down on them – they tried to throw their cargo into the Caribbean, although it was subsequently recovered.

So far this deployment the ship has bagged:

- £36m of cocaine seized on a go-fast after a night-time chase off the Dominican Republic
- £10m of cocaine from a British-registered yacht near Bermuda
- £21m of cocaine in August seized from a speed boat.

"I must acknowledge the skill of my flight crew and Royal Marines snipers but this drugs bust was made possible by the work of the entire ship's company," said Cdr Paul Hammond, Argyll's CO.

"We have had a series of drugs busts and they have all been different – they have ranged from night-time chases to disabling engines with sniper fire.

"But they have all shown the effect and versatility that can be delivered by a Royal Navy warship."

The £9m of cocaine was the final bust of the deployment and the ship's collective success was singled out by First Sea Lord Admiral Sir George Zambellas.

"HMS Argyll has enjoyed phenomenal

success in disrupting the drugs trade which blights the UK," he said.

"This latest haul of drugs rounds off a highly successful operational deployment to the region. Having enhanced the Royal Navy's authority in and around the Caribbean over the past six months, her ship's company have really earned their leave, and can reflect on a job well done."

Which should be just about now, for the ship was due back in her native Devonport in time for Christmas. Her final port of call was also among the rarest on the Caribbean tour: Havana.

Indeed, Argyll became only the third British Naval vessel in half a century to visit the Cuban capital, exchanging a 21-gun salute with an historic fort as she sailed into port.

The frigate hosted British Ambassador to Cuba Tim Cole, local military leaders and more than 2,000 members of the public, while the ship's rugby team took on (and lost to) a local side.

The match was part of wider efforts to promote Anglo-Cuban sporting ties, concentrating on the development of football, cricket and rugby on the Caribbean isle, leading up to an annual football game to commemorate the first recorded match in Cuba in 1911.

Picture: LA(Phot) Steve Johncock, HMS Argyll

AUTOMATIC FOR OUR PEOPLE

THE Royal Navy is holding its first 'robot wars', inviting firms at the cutting-edge of science to demonstrate unmanned aircraft, boats and submarines.

The head of the Navy – First Sea Lord Admiral Sir George Zambellas – has challenged academics, scientists, technology firms, plus British and Allied military forces, to show off hi-tech systems which could revolutionise naval warfare.

In October 2016 the most promising of those systems will be put to the test during a

fortnight-long war game around Scotland, alongside regular Navy, Army and Air Forces.

The Navy has recently formed its first squadron for pilotless aircraft, 700X at Culdrose in Cornwall operating 'eye in the sky' ScanEagle reconnaissance planes (see page 12), is experimenting with remote-controlled minehunters, and is buying four 'wave gliders' – underwater gliders which run for up to four months gathering data about the ocean.

The Fleet's robotics officer Cdr Steve Prest believes these are just the first steps into the

world of maritime autonomous systems – to give naval 'robots' their correct title.

"This could fundamentally change the way the Royal Navy does its business – I compare it with the change from the battleship era to the age of the aircraft carrier," he said.

"People get excited about the future – they ask how real this is. Technologically, we're pretty close. But autonomous systems are not going to replace warships – a warship can hunt submarines, tackle piracy, catch drug smugglers, provide disaster relief and act as an ambassador

for the UK. A robot can't do all that."

The First Sea Lord, who is eager to tap the white heat of robotic technology for use on what he calls '3D' missions – dull, dirty and dangerous – wants his Navy to set the pace, hence his challenge to industry.

"The Royal Navy will lead – and win – through the innovative and robust exploitation of maritime autonomous systems. They open up a new world of possibilities," he said.

"We have an enormous well of potential, sitting there, waiting to be tapped."

The systems of companies and organisations which rise to the challenge will be tested in the USA next year, then on a Royal Navy warship in 2016.

Those will be followed by a series of demonstrations, trials and experiments carried out at the Joint Warrior exercise in the autumn of the same year, for which Cdr Prest has high hopes.

"I'd love to see an unmanned aircraft spotting something and sending another unmanned vehicle – a boat or a submersible – to investigate and provide quality information for a commander to enable an attack being ordered if

necessary," he added.

"We are providing the opportunity. The challenge is for industry to show us what they can do. They're the ones with the good ideas."

"That's why we're seeking innovation from our allies, academia, industry and especially, the small and medium-sized enterprises who are active in this area of technology."

"Before the iPad, no-one thought they needed something like it. Now everyone has one. Someone out there will have the iPad for autonomous naval systems."

● HMS Northumberland approaches Devonport from Plymouth Sound as she returns from her seven-month deployment

Pictures: LA(Phot) Joel Rouse, LA(Phot) Caroline Davies and LA(Phot) Iggy Roberts

Daddy's back for day care



IF YOU want an image which captures 'daddy is home' perfectly, then you'll struggle to do better than this of HMS Northumberland's LS(AWW) Aaron Crowder hugging his daughter Katherine.

The leading hand and his 200 shipmates received a rapturous welcome home as their frigate completed a seven-month Indian Ocean patrol keeping piracy and other illegal activity in check.

More than 500 cheering friends and family members lined the Devonport jetty to greet the warship.

"There's nothing like your two children running towards you laughing and excited and scooping them into your arms – it's the best feeling in the world," said PO(ETME) Kristoph Goldsbrough, who was greeted

by his excited children Izabel, three, Ayden, four, and his wife Zia.

"It's been a challenging and rewarding deployment. Now I'm looking forward to taking my son to school and restoring normal relations with my family."

Since leaving Devon in the spring, the frigate has called in at Gibraltar, Souda Bay in Crete, Bahrain, Dubai and Fujairah in the United Arab Emirates, Mumbai in India, Muscat in Oman, Malta and Lisbon.

She passed through the Strait of Hormuz – gateway to the Gulf – a dozen times, the Bab-el-Mandeb – the narrows at the foot of the Red Sea – on half a dozen occasions and added 38,000 miles to her odometer during 201 days away from Devonport.

All that effort demanded a lot of fuel and a lot of grub: 4,000kg of sausages, 40,000 eggs, 25,000kg of meat, 40,000kg of potatoes and

12,000 litres of milk.

The core of Northumberland's deployment was devoted to board-and-search operations for suspicious items – drugs, weapons – or intelligence gathering as part of the on-going international maritime security mission.

"As the only female member of the boarding team my primary role is to conduct a search of any women and children should there be any on board," said AB(WS) Alice Haggett. "Fortunately, during this deployment that wasn't required. My other role requires me to search the vessel looking for anything that shouldn't be there, for example weapons or drugs."

The Royal Marines boarding party conducted joint training with the US Marine Corps in Bahrain and carried out an amphibious exercise in Kuwait. The frigate also knuckled down to her submarine-

hunting roots by testing her ability against American and British boats.

And on the lighter side, the crew took part in flight-deck sports and a barbecue and charity dinner nights, all raising £5,000 for Northumberland's numerous charities.

There were also emotional scenes at RNAS Yeovilton as Lynx flight 215 from 815NAS arrived home after seven months in the Gulf region.

The homecoming was made extra special for Sam Ronaldson, who was also celebrating his tenth birthday as he welcomed home his dad CPO Paul Ronaldson.

Sam said: "It's the best birthday and Christmas present I could have."

His mum Karen Ronaldson added: "I don't think Paul realises how much he has been missed and he can now take back responsibility as the homework master."



● Members of Northumberland's crew wave to relatives



● PO Gareth Jones with sons Declan and Toby



● Lt Russ Chandler with sons Owen and Alfie



● CPO Paul Ronaldson with wife Karen and children Zoe and Sam

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JOIN US AND GET THE MOST FROM YOUR PENSION

Youngsters in the spotlight

INSPIRING sailors of the future was one of the key themes for HMS St Albans as she paid a week-long visit to London.

The Type 23 frigate hosted a number of events and dignitaries, demonstrating her impressive capability and embarked Merlin Mark 2 helicopter.

"Not only is it one of the best cities in the world but it is close to our affiliated city of St Albans," said the ship's Commanding Officer Cdr Catherine Jordan.

"We have really enjoyed our visit to London, it was extremely successful and gave our guests the chance to see a Royal Navy warship and explore what it can do, particularly in an operational capacity.

"It was also a fantastic opportunity for the ship's company to show off their ship and meet people from across a number of different sectors including apprenticeship training and the Inspiring Women Campaign."

Following their night-time arrival, *main image*, the crew of HMS St Albans kicked off their busy programme of events with two Centenary Apprenticeship National Events on board.

Visitors included the Minister for Skills, Nick Boles MP, Rear Admiral Simon Williams, Assistant Chief of Defence Staff Personnel and Training



● Cdr Catherine Jordan addresses students from Bermondsey School



● Capt Steve Pearson, Captain of Surface Ships Portsmouth Flotilla meets apprentices on the ship



● Students from Bermondsey School on the flightdeck with the frigate's Merlin Mk2

and guest speakers, including Terry Morgan the Chairman of Cross Rail.

Demonstrating the relevance of apprenticeships to the military were a cross section of serving personnel both from the ship's company and also Royal Marines, RAF and Army units from across the UK. Amongst these personnel there were the familiar engineering trades right through to the more obscure qualifications, including an apprentice farrier serving with the Blues and Royals.

ET Dom Proctor, who is a Weapon Engineer onboard St Albans said: "I was an apprentice in civilian life and

now I have a new career in the Navy. I know how important qualifications are and it is comforting to know that I am gaining more through my Naval Service."

Cdr Sarah Johns, who as the Navy lead on Education and Apprenticeships, helped coordinate the event, said: "The Ministry of Defence is proud to be recognised as the single largest deliverer of apprenticeships in the UK with over 18,000 available to Servicemen each year."

Later the ship hosted a reception and capability demonstration which was attended by a number of guests including Miriam González Durántes who is champion for the Inspiring

Women Campaign to which the RN also belongs.

The theme of championing females was continued with a visit by pupils from the Harris Academy in Bermondsey – a local girl's school in the heart of London. They were given a presentation on Royal Naval careers and spoke to members of the Naval Service Women's Network.

Ship tours were held for Sea Cadets from St Albans and London and 20 members of the ship's company attended the England v Australia rugby game at Twickenham where they paraded before the match.

And several personnel travelled to their namesake city where they took part in a community project.



● Miriam González Durántes addresses guests on HMS St Albans

Pictures: LA(PHOT) Keith Morgan

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Medics put to work in Haiti Carry on doctor

HMS Iron Duke's medical team worked in a hospital in Haiti during the ship's historic visit to the Caribbean country.

The Type 23 frigate was the first British Naval vessel to the island nation since RFA Largs Bay delivered earthquake aid in 2010.

Iron Duke was at the end of her six-month deployment to the South Atlantic and marked her entry into the Port of Cap Haitien – on the country's north coast – with a 21-gun salute.

The frigate spent two days at anchor hosting local dignitaries, officials and a number of UN workers as well as acting as a venue for an important regional meeting on immigration.

The ship's medical team went to work in Cap Haitien at the British-run Haiti Hospital Appeal – a charity established to help reduce the high maternal and infant mortality rates in the country.

Surg Lt Rosie Miller said: "This was without doubt the most rewarding experience of the deployment for me.

"Being able to provide something really meaningful, and potentially life-saving, means so much to me and I hope that this will make a real difference to the community."

The visit was also an opportunity for the ship's company to get involved in several community projects, including the renovation and restoration of a local town square and helping to rebuild a popular footbridge.

More than 100 personnel took part in these projects working alongside their UN colleagues based at Cap Haitien.

During the work the Mayor of



● Above: Surg Lt Miller leads a medical lesson in Haiti
● Below: AB Nelson and a member of Canadian Exchange team painting the town square in Cap Haitien



Cap Haitien, Jean Renaud, and the British Ambassador, Steven Fisher, both visited and thanked the team for their efforts.

Not ones to miss a chance, the ship's football team also set about playing against a strong local team who quickly demonstrated their superior skills beating the Iron Duke squad 4-0.

RFA Largs Bay visited Haiti

in February 2010. She arrived in the country carrying tonnes of Department for International Development (DfID), charity and non governmental aid following a devastating earthquake which killed as many as 200,000 people and left 1.5 million homeless.

HMS Iron Duke was due to return to Portsmouth as *Navy News* went to press.



● Surg Lt Rosie Miller with a child from the Haiti Hospital Appeal

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A wolf in winter



THANKS to screen grabs of video footage, herewith one of two Seawolf missiles shattering the inch-thick glass covering its silo aboard HMS Richmond as the Portsmouth-based frigate tests her defences against air attack.

Gearing up for a looming deployment, the Type 23 flashed up her Seawolf trackers ready to engage sea-skimming targets coming for her off the south coast...

...which the 6ft-tall Seawolfs did as they knocked down the incoming simulated missiles – towed on a very long wire – at a converging speed of more than three times the speed of sound.

Ensuring that the missile and tracker system ran like proverbial clockwork for the test firing was Lt Cdr Jim Sampson and his weapon engineer department.

"Richmond must be ready to defend herself, and protect others at all times," he said.

"This type of firing proves she is capable of just that – there is no substitute for a live firing to confirm the system is working correctly, and can deal with the latest threats.

"Whilst a lot of preparation goes into a peacetime missile firing, the Seawolf system is always ready to go – at extremely short notice."



F1 fixing for F78

IN THE pits at the Yas Marina Circuit in Abu Dhabi, pop star and TV presenter Dannii Minogue poses with the men and women responsible for looking after a multi-million pound, state-of-the-art machine.

No we're not talking about Sebastian Vettel's Red Bull F1 racer, but the 4,500 tonnes of battleship grey that is HMS Kent.

Weapon and marine engineers from the Portsmouth-based frigate were invited behind the scenes by the Milton Keynes-based team during race weekend.

"It was an amazing experience – the sounds whilst working in the pit lane were immense," said LET(ME) Josh Phillips.

"The engineering precision involved is exactly the same as in the Royal Navy but the speed at which the Red Bull engineers complete the tasks is neck-breaking.

"When I joined the Royal Navy as an engineer I never dreamed that I would have the opportunity to be in the pit lane at an international Grand Prix.

"My mates back home are so jealous of my F1 experience, but they are even more envious that I got a selfie with Dannii Minogue!"

HMS Kent's engineering team not only got to tour the pits and get their hands on some of the



equipment, but they were able to watch the action at the Grand Prix unfold from their trackside position.

"It was a fantastic experience. Every member of the team knew exactly what to do," said WO Juan Lawson, the senior weapon engineer rating aboard Kent.

"The engineering aspects were incredible and the team worked like robots.

"The F1 team and the Royal Navy work in very similar ways – everyone has their own job to do and they are highly trained to fulfil that role."

And while the matelots were tinkering in the Red Bull

workshops, some of the race team engineers were getting to grips in the bowels of the Type 23.

Impressive as the Formula 1 cars of Vettel and co-driver Daniel Ricciardo are, their Renault engines 'only' generate 600-760HP.

Kent's cruising engines produce 4,000. Her Spey gas turbines go all the way up to 31,000HP.

The tie-up followed a visit by Britain's ranking sailor, First Sea Lord Admiral Sir George Zambellas, to Red Bull's Buckinghamshire HQ to look at how innovative F1 technology might be adapted for the RN's use.



Picture: Dave Sherfield, HMS Raleigh

Internal affairs

FIRE, fire, fire. Fire in the galley.

Two breaths. Your capacity to think and move is already reduced.

Fire, fire, fire. Fire in the galley.

Two more breaths. You're now a casualty and will need evacuating for medical treatment.

Despite the public perception of submarines, fire – or rather smoke – will knock you out long before your boat floods.

You might have minutes to deal with water pouring in. You have seconds to deal with a fire.

Which is why HMS Vengeance's WO1 Matt Farr and WO2 Pete Farrell of HMS Triumph are fully toggled up and ready to descend into two decks of red-hot, smoke-filled, pitch-black hell.

After four days of intensive training, the senior rates and colleagues from across the Silent Service are about to go through a six-hour assessment to prove that they can deal with a conflagration inside a boat – and can pass on their knowledge to their shipmates.

Every five years the most experienced deeps – coxswains, wreckers, chief stokers, the XO (basically all the people who deliver training on a boat to their fellow crew) – descend (sorry) on HMS Raleigh for the advanced fire-fighting course.

The three-storey training complex in the damage control school features mock-ups of a galley, bunk and mess decks, engine and manoeuvring room, plus hatches, ladders.

It's used to teach the men and women of the Surface Fleet and Submarine Service the art of dealing with a fire at sea.

Fire is fire, right? The methods must be the same whether you're on the surface of the Gulf or 500ft below the Indian Ocean.

Wrong.

For a start, there are electrical fires, fuel fires, carbonaceous (wood, paper).

On a ship, however intense the blaze, there's always the upper deck and fresh air. Not so on a submarine.

"We don't go up, we go down to a safe depth – below the keel of the biggest ship out there," explains CPOMEM(M)(SM) Andy Heywood, fire-fighting training officer, who has 34 years experience in boats.

As for tackling the blaze, fight it fast, fight it hard and don't use too much water.

"Prevention is the best cure – you don't want a fire on a submarine," says WO Farrell. "You're still under water. You can't vent smoke, you can't get fresh air in, and you have to be clever in the way you use water to extinguish a fire – you don't want water in the people tank."

You don't. But above all you don't want smoke. And if you do get smoke, donning an emergency breathing mask (EBS) in mere seconds is a matter of life and death.

When the Canadian boat Chicoutimi – formerly HMS Upholder – caught fire a decade ago, the crew had the fire out in 75 seconds.

By then, however, one man was fatally injured, more than half a dozen shipmates needed treatment for smoke inhalation – and yet every one of the casualties had their emergency

breathing masks on inside ten seconds.

Within two minutes your attack breathing apparatus team must be in action. A fully-suited-up fire-fighting team has eight minutes to be on the scene.

"Most fires are put out quickly by the people who discover them. If you've got to put on the full kit, then things are pretty serious," WO Farr says.

And right now, as the final exercise kicks off with smoke billowing from the top of the training facility, things are very serious.

The final exercise runs for about six hours and as well as the less-than-simple task of dealing with flames and smoke, for the final exercise Andy and his colleagues throw other challenges into the mix: journalists asking awkward questions on the jetty, an admiral turning up demanding answers, a crazy skipper. The local fire brigade also rocks up – it's good practice for them.

And if all that isn't enough, CPO Heywood can throw one more spanner in the works.

"If anyone is doing really well, we kill them off."

Not literally, we hasten to add...

Anyway, time to descend into hell.

A five-strong fire fighting team in suits, helmets, extended duration breathing apparatus (EDBA) clambers laboriously up the ladder – whilst the second team get dressed ready to relieve the first team.

The passageways are considerably wider than, say, a T-boat, but – particularly when the fires are raging and the smoke fills the complex – the innards of this ill-starred ship are claustrophobic, dark and forbidding.

Directing things, the breathing apparatus controller with a clipboard in hand – no iPads and gadgets here. White board. Chinagraph pencil. Dial wheel.

The names of the team members are recorded, the pressure of their EDBA cylinder, the time they went into the compartment and the time when they should be relieved – determined by the man with the lowest pressure in his cylinder.

Their EDBA cylinder should last up to an hour, but if you are active then you'll use up air at a faster rate. In fact, they'll only be in the galley for a handful of minutes.

"Relieve your teams whenever possible – fighting fires is exhausting," CPO Heywood explains. "Get your team out, get them refreshed."

Rather than spewing gallons of water in waterfall-esque gushes, those (literally) in the line of fire throw a fine mist mixed with foam to quell the inferno.

Observing from a safe distance, CPO Heywood has a Cheshire cat-grin etched across his face.

"This is the best job in the Navy. I get to play with fire – but the real satisfaction is from the crews passing through. These lads eat, sleep, dream and breathe fire-fighting all week long.

"The young lads are the best. They're like sponges – they want to know everything and soak it in."

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Opening the X box of tricks

IF YOU know your alphabet (and we're hoping you do...), you'll know 'x' follows 'w'.

So when 700W Naval Air Squadron passed into history in September... and re-formed virtually the next day, W turned into an X for the unit's latest incarnation.

Here, however, X stands for 'Xperimental' (spelling is never the military's strong point...) and a new era in the Fleet Air Arm: unmanned flight.

For the past year, the RN has been venturing into the world of pilotless aircraft, the ScanEagle 'flying eyes' launched from the decks of HMS Somerset, Northumberland and RFA Cardigan Bay, and now HMS Kent, which is on counter-piracy patrol in the Indian Ocean.

For most of that time, the activities of the small aircraft were directed by the specially-formed 831 Flight at RNAS Culdrose.

With the passing of 700W and the desire to bring the world of unmanned flight in line with other Fleet Air Arm units, 831 became 700X.

The squadron has been created to oversee the deployment of Remotely Piloted Air Systems in official RN parlance (RPASes) and to pave the way for similar aircraft in the future.

So far, we've only used ScanEagle, as part of a £30m deal with the aircraft's manufacturers Boeing.

Launched by a catapult on a 14ft ramp, ScanEagle can remain airborne for 12 hours operating at ranges of up to 40 miles from the mother ship, beaming live



● ScanEagle on the verge of leaving its launcher aboard RFA Cardigan Bay
Picture: LA(Phot) Dan Rosenbaum

video of what it sees – by day or night, thanks to its electro-optical and infra-red camera – directly into the ship's operations room.

Since being introduced to ships deployed east of Suez at the beginning of the year, ScanEagle has clocked up nearly 1,500 hours on missions.

It was brought in to provide eyes for the Royal Navy's minehunting force in the Gulf, but has proved equally useful in counter-piracy and counter-smuggling operations thanks to its ability to constantly watch

over a boarding operation – or monitor a suspicious vessel pretty much undetected.

"It's clear that ScanEagle is a tremendous asset – the quality of the imagery is superb, even at night-time," said 700X's Commanding Officer Lt Cdr Al Rogers.

"Commanding officers have nothing but praise for it, but it's not a replacement for a Merlin or Lynx, rather an addition to the warship's suite of sensors."

His squadron has two roles: parent unit for the flights

deployed on Royal Navy vessels east of Suez; and to trial and evaluate any future unmanned aircraft which the Fleet Air Arm decides to invest in.

It's one of the smallest units in the Royal Navy – the three ScanEagle flights total six RN personnel (one officer as Flight Commander, plus one petty officer as the Senior Maintenance Rating each), and a handful of headquarters staff.

The RN team in a flight direct the ScanEagle's operations, a four-strong team from Boeing

Insitu fly and maintain it.

"This is a fantastic job," says Lt Cdr Rogers. "This is the Fleet Air Arm's first step into the world of remotely-piloted air systems and we are looking to develop our tactics and embrace this new technology ensuring the Royal Navy remains a world leader in aviation at sea – whether manned or unmanned."

X is the latest form of a *Dr Who*-esque squadron which has reincarnated every few years to meet the changing demands of the Fleet Air Arm, and especially

the introduction of new aircraft into front-line service.

For the first few years of its existence, however, 700 was very much a front-line unit – evidenced by its string of battle honours in World War 2.

It evolved into a test pilot training squadron late in 1944, but it's really in the 1950s that 700 became a trials and evaluation squadron – since when it has paved the way for Buccaneers, Sea Kings, Phantoms, Sea Harriers and Merlins among others.



River Plate 1939
Norway 1940
Spartivento 1940
Atlantic 1940-41
Matapan 1941
East Indies 1941
Mediterranean 1942
North Africa 1942-43
Normandy 1944

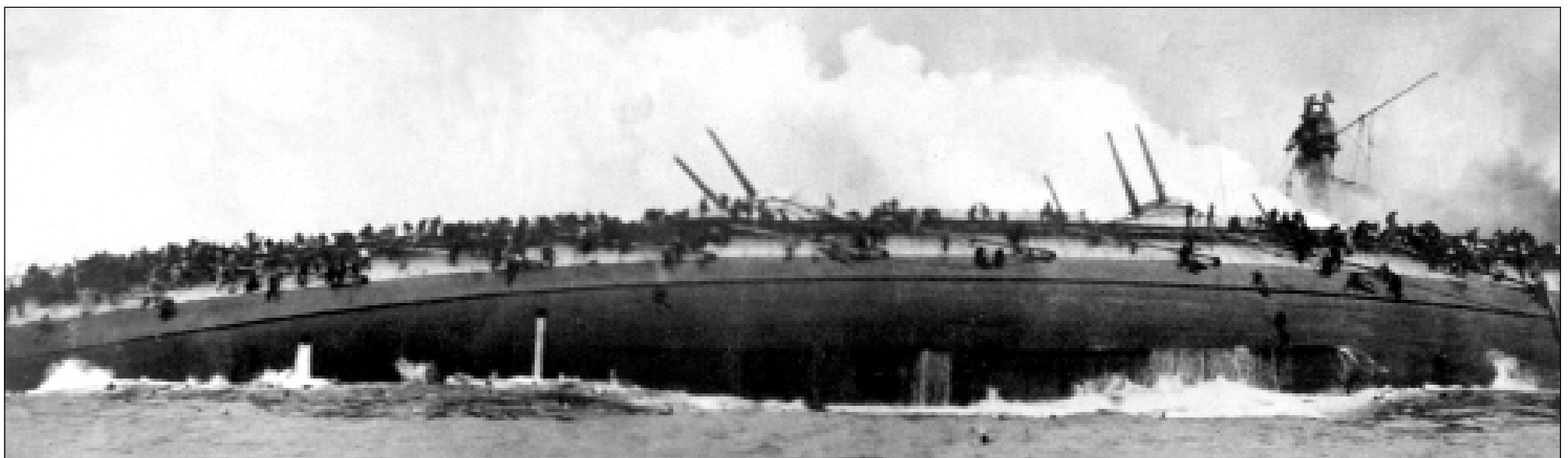
Motto: *Experientia docet* – experience teaches

Aircraft: Boeing Insitu ScanEagle

Engines: 1 x 2 stroke piston engine generating 1½HP
Wing Span: 3.11m (10ft 2in)
Length: 1.7m (5ft 7in)
Ceiling: 5,950m (19,500ft)
Speed: 80kts (cruising 60kts)
Endurance: 12 hours



PHOTOGRAPHIC MEMORIES



JUST after 1pm on Sunday January 24 1915 and several hundred crew of the German armoured cruiser SMS Blücher scramble down the ship's side as she turns turtle in the North Sea.

In five minutes, these Matrosen – the German equivalent of matelot – will be unable to use their hands in waters no warmer than 6°C. In 30 minutes, hypothermia will set in. Within an hour, all will be unconscious.

Such was death in the grey wastes. Nearly 800 men perished, either in the icy sea or trapped in the bowels of the Blücher.

The cruiser succumbed to at least 50 hits from the guns of the Grand Fleet – and at least a couple of torpedoes during her death throes.

Blücher's final moments were captured by the camera of Fleet Paymaster – equivalent of commander – John Spencer Place aboard one of the cruisers which closed in for the kill.

It became one of the most dramatic images of the Great War at sea – proof of a great naval victory over the Germans, and revenge for the infamy

of the attacks on the east coast towns of Hartlepool, Scarborough and Whitby one month earlier.

But as with most battles in the 1914-18 conflict, the clash at the Dogger Bank was a half-victory which delivered rather less than it offered.

As with the sortie by the German Fleet in December, British intelligence was alerted to a sally by the High Seas Fleet. This time, the enemy's target were British fishermen trawling in the shallows of the Dogger Bank – about 170 miles east of Newcastle.

Five battle-cruisers raised steam, joined by more than half a dozen cruisers and three dozen destroyers. Before dawn on January 24, they sighted the Germans' scouting forces.

The core of the enemy force was three battle-cruisers and one armoured cruiser, the Blücher, supported by a handful of light cruisers and 18 destroyers.

Put simply, the Germans were outnumbered, outgunned and outpaced. With clear weather and the wind in the Royal Navy's favour, the

Kaiser's sailors faced annihilation as their admiral, Franz von Hipper, wisely decided to turn for home.

Hipper could not outrun his foe and shortly before 9am, the British flagship Lion opened fire at a range of about 20,000 yards – more than 11 miles.

Despite a 5:4 superiority over its foe, confusion in the British line led to one German battle-cruiser, the Moltke, remaining untouched as the Royal Navy's guns concentrated on the three remaining enemy vessels.

Lion hit the lead German ship, SMS Seydlitz, with a shell which penetrated the aft turret, causing a flash fire which would have reached her magazine – and blown the vessel apart – but for the decision to flood it.

A few minutes later Lion herself almost suffered the same fate as she took a hit from the Derfflinger.

Indeed the British flagship was taking terrible punishment – more than a dozen hits from 11in and 12in shells. The 'big cat' listed to port, her mess decks filled with smoke, decks buckled making batten down the

hatches tricky.

For all the damage, casualties numbered little more than 20. But Lion was without power – unable to signal by radio or lamp. To pass on his commands, the battle-cruisers' commander David Beatty resorted to flags.

Two halyards had been shot away in the tumult of battle. The next – separate – instructions Beatty gave were hoisted on the same halyard. They became a single order: *course NE, attack the rear of the enemy*. In other words: concentrate on the Blücher.

Which is exactly what the battle-cruisers did. Beatty tried to stop them demanding his flag lieutenant raise Nelson's legendary: *Engage the enemy more closely*. In the intervening 110 years, it had been stricken from the RN codebook. The best the unfortunate young officer could offer was: *Keep nearer to the enemy*.

Amid the fug of gun, fire and boiler smoke, it was not seen. The British closed in on the Blücher, which was

sacrificed by Hipper so the bulk of his force could escape. Three in every four men aboard the cruiser died in an agonising final battle which lasted a couple of hours.

By then, David Beatty had transferred his flag to destroyer HMS Attack to better direct the battle – and was loudly cheered off the Lion by all hands on deck.

He was cheered again two days later when he rejoined the Lion as she was towed back into Rosyth by HMS Indomitable for repairs.

Britons celebrated a triumph at a time when there was little joy in the news. Beatty was dispirited convinced "we were going to get four – the lot – and four we ought to have got."

It would be another 16 months before Beatty and his battle-cruisers would clash with Hipper again.

■ This picture (Q 22687) – and 9,999,999 others from a century of war and peace – can be viewed or purchased at www.iwmcollections.org.uk, by emailing photos@iwm.org.uk or by phoning 0207 416 5333.

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Honouring heroes as dark



A WREATH of poppies floats in the Mediterranean sea following a service aboard HMS Bulwark marking the 100th anniversary of a massive explosion which ripped through her namesake.

The 15,000-tonne battleship was anchored in the Medway Estuary off the north Kent coast when she was torn apart by an internal blast shortly after dawn on November 26 1914, killing all but a handful of the 750 sailors on board.

The current HMS Bulwark – the seventh ship to bear the name – was returning from her Cougar 14 deployment and held a ceremony on the flight deck, attended by officers, sailors and Royal Marines.

Capt Dean Bassett, Bulwark's CO, said:

"As we paused on our Cougar 14 deployment we remembered those who gave their lives in this tragic accident, remaining ever mindful of the dangers of operations at sea."

Navy investigators quickly discounted theories of a U-boat attack or a Zeppelin raid and focused on ammunition which had been stored in cross-passages. More than likely cordite charges left next to a boiler bulkhead ignited.

The blast was cataclysmic – bits of Bulwark were hurled up to six miles and the pier at Southend shook. A chest of drawers landed half a mile away and personal effects rained down on the town of Sheerness.

The dead were buried with full military honours. Most were laid to rest in Gillingham, some in Rochester and the occasional one in Portsmouth – Bulwark's home base. Bodies were still being washed up on Kent shores two months after the disaster.

The wreck remains on the bed of the Medway



● The brass plaque at HMS Excellent marking the loss of the Royal Marines bandmen

– just segments of the port and starboard bow. The rest simply vapourised.

One hundred years to the day a short but poignant act of Remembrance was also held at HMS Excellent in Portsmouth.

Focal point for the ceremony was a brass plaque in the wardroom which commemorates the loss of the 15-strong HMS Excellent Royal Marines Band in the tragedy.

The Last Post was sounded by two Royal Marines buglers and Naval Chaplain, the Reverend Bernard Clarke, conducted the service.

Wreaths were laid under the plaque by senior Royal Marines commander, Brigadier Richard Spencer, and Cdr Martin Evans, Commanding Officer of HMS Excellent.

Rev Clarke said: "The ceremony was all about marking this terrible tragedy and reflecting on the wider sacrifices made by not only the Royal Marines Band Service but the wider Naval family and the whole of humanity during World War 1."

■ Bulwark's marines storm beach, see page 16



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● Above: Bugler Tom Cartwright, The Rev Bernard Clarke and Cpl Nathan Crossley at the service at HMS Excellent

● Below: Capt Dean Bassett and Cdre Jerry Kyd lead personnel in a service on HMS Bulwark

Pictures: LA(Phot) Des Wade and LA(Phot) Gary Weatherston



days recalled



● A Royal Navy guard of honour beside the new commemorative stone and plaque in Edinburgh
Pictures: LA Phot Pepe Hogan

Tribute to first Navy VC of WW1

THE first sailor to win Britain's highest military decoration in World War 1 has been honoured with a commemorative stone.

Cdr Henry Peel Ritchie won the Victoria Cross for his bravery in completing allied Naval search and demolition operations off the east coast of Africa at the height of the war, all while he was severely wounded.

Among those attending the ceremony at 1 Melville Crescent in Edinburgh – the place of his birth and now home of the Scotland Office – were RN personnel and veterans as well as students and teachers from George Watson's College, the school he attended.

Little is known about Cdr Ritchie after the war. The last trace of his family tree is from the 1958 census when he died at his home Craigroyston House, Davidson's Mains, Edinburgh, just after one of his three daughters emigrated to America. There is also no trace of his medal.

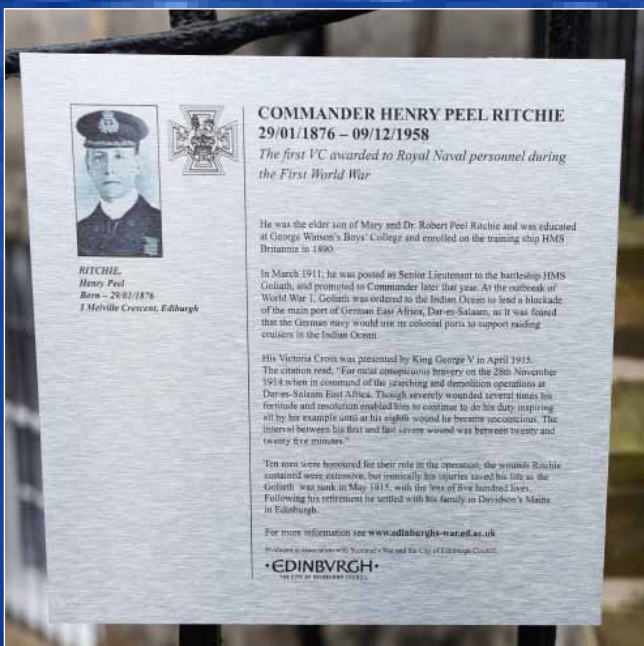
Capt Chris Smith, Naval Regional Commander for Scotland and Northern Ireland, said: "Cdr Ritchie was the first Royal Navy VC Award of World War 1 so it's particularly significant for us that we are able to acknowledge his bravery in a suitable and appropriate way.

"During the action at Dar-es-Salaam, in East Africa, he was in charge of HMS Goliath's steam-driven pinnacle or ship's boat as they carried out demolition operations when they came under enemy attack.

"Despite being wounded himself, Cdr Ritchie steered the boat to safety, through a sustained hail of enemy fire until, being hit an eighth time, he collapsed.

"But his boldness undoubtedly saved the lives of his crew and this was recognised through the award of the Victoria Cross.

"Edinburgh has a strong connection with the Navy, and Henry Peel Ritchie as a born and bred Scot and Edinburgh native demonstrated the highest of standards and displayed unique courage.



"So it's an honour to be able to pay tribute to that courage here, in the city which helped define the qualities that made him the man he was and I know that the Royal Navy and the City are both very happy that we are able to unveil this lasting testament to his bravery."

Cdr Ritchie received his medal from King George V at Buckingham Palace in April 1915.

The Lord Provost, RT Hon Donald Wilson, who is also Edinburgh's Veterans Champion, said: "I am delighted that Cdr Henry Peel Ritchie's life and story is being commemorated in this way.

"His medal may be lost, but at least his story won't be. His tale and his honour will live on."

Cdr Ritchie's third cousin Malcolm Watters, who was born in Dar-es-Salaam and attended George Watson's College in Edinburgh also attended the service.

He joined appeals for anyone with information about Cdr Ritchie, including the whereabouts of his medal, contact pressoffice@scotlandoffice.gsi.gov.uk

● Above: A plaque in tribute to Cdr Ritchie

● Below: The commemorative paving stone



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Sanding room only

AS beachheads go this one's pretty small, but it didn't stop the Royal Marines from storming it.

Exercise Sea Snake saw commandos from HMS Bulwark and RFA Lyme Bay land on East Beach (about the size of four football pitches at low tide) in Gibraltar – much to the amusement of watching locals.

The routine training exercise, involving personnel from Charlie Company 40 Commando and 4 Assault Squadron Royal Marines (ASRM), tests the unique skills needed for amphibious operations.

The marines went ashore in offshore raiding craft and specialist landing craft, capable of carrying heavy vehicles and tanks, as well as stores and supplies.

Bulwark's Amphibious Operations Officer Lt Col Jon Coomber said: "Gibraltar offers the perfect mix of maritime terrain on which to hone our amphibious skills.

"It's fantastic to have this opportunity to exercise Bulwark's Assault Squadron in this the last exercise of the deployment prior to the Cougar Task Group's return to the UK."

Bulwark, along with amphibious support ship Lyme Bay, had been deployed on Cougar 14, the routine annual deployment of elements of the UK's Response Force Task Group (RFTG).

She sailed from Plymouth in August to the Mediterranean and Gulf regions, demonstrating the Royal Navy's capacity to operate anywhere in the world.

The Cougar 14 Task Group worked closely with partner nations, testing its flexibility and demonstrating the government's long-term commitment to security and stability throughout the Mediterranean and Gulf regions.

During the deployment HMS Bulwark worked with the German and French Navies, with the captain of a German frigate paying a visit to the RN ship.

FGS Schleswig-Holstein joined the assault ship while on their way to the Gulf.

Capt Thorsten Geldmacher met with the Commander of the embarked UK Task Force, Cdre Jerry Kyd, and Bulwark's CO, Capt Dean Bassett, to discuss the joint exercises.



● HMS Bulwark enters Valletta in Malta

Picture: © Paul Spiteri Lucas, Times of Malta



Schleswig-Holstein remained with the Cougar Task Group until they sailed back through the Red Sea.

Bulwark also held a brief exercise with a French warship after passing through the Suez Canal on her way to the Gulf.

She held a series of exercises and manoeuvres with La Fayette-class frigate FS Courbet, practising their maritime skills with all three nations working together, before parting ways as the Task Group continued east.

During her journey back to the UK, Bulwark stopped off in the stunning surroundings of Valletta's Grand Harbour in Malta – almost a year to the day since her last visit.

For many of the 500-strong ship's company it was a welcome return to an island redolent with many happy memories and a wealth of activities to enjoy.

Capt Bassett said: "The historic bond between the Royal Navy and the island of Malta remains as strong as ever, and I am extremely privileged to have brought the Fleet flagship back to Valletta."

Bulwark usually has a ship's company

of 350, a quarter of whom are made up from 4 ASRM.

In addition, the ship can carry up to 225 Royal Marines in dedicated accommodation for long periods, and another 500 in austere conditions for short periods.

Her flight deck can accommodate two Chinook or two Merlin helicopters. A large floodable dock holds four large landing craft, with another four carried on davits on the ship's sides.

The RFTG is the United Kingdom's high readiness maritime force, comprising ships, submarines, aircraft and a landing force of Royal Marines.

RFTG is at short notice to act in response to any contingency tasking if required. This could include providing humanitarian aid, maritime security operations, Defence international engagement and supporting regional stability.

The Marines of Charlie Company are the cold weather and mountain warfare specialist element of the current Lead Commando Group.

Bulwark was returning to her home port of Devonport as Navy News went to press.



Pictures: LA(Phot) Des Wade and Cpl Scott Robertson RAF





● Capt David Fields, the UK Naval Attaché in Moscow, and CPO Chris Donkin from the British Embassy salute the fallen in Arkhangelsk Allied Cemetery

Allied cause in Russia remembered

SAILORS who kept the flame of freedom burning in the icy wastes of northern Russia in both world wars were honoured by today's generation serving in the country.

Capt David Fields, Britain's Naval Attaché, and CPO Chris Donkin from the British Embassy in Moscow left the capital behind to remember Britons buried in the distant cities of Murmansk and Archangelsk.

Both were key ports in the delivery of aid to Russia – Arkhangelsk in both world wars, Murmansk in the second global conflagration especially.

The two sailors first headed to Murmansk, nearly 200 miles inside the Arctic Circle.

The city was the destination for many of the convoys dispatched to support the Soviet Union's struggle against Germany between 1941-45, a lifeline at sea which cost the lives of more than 3,000 sailors and saw over 100 warships and merchant vessels sunk.

Less well known by most Britons is the city's role a generation earlier in Allied efforts to unseat the Bolsheviks.

For two years Murmansk was occupied by Allied forces and 'White' – anti-Communist Russians – forces.

At least 40 British Servicemen died in 1918-19 and were laid to rest in the 'Old British Cemetery' used by No 86 General Hospital. Their bodies were subsequently moved a decade later to the New British Cemetery, now the resting place of 83 men who died in the Murmansk region.

The walled cemetery was the first site at which Capt Fields and CPO Donkin laid a wreath, joined by a small Russian delegation, before the Britons paid their respects at the Kursk memorial – part of the fin of the nuclear submarine which sank with all hands in August 2000 following a torpedo accident – and the iconic Defenders of the Soviet Arctic during the Great Patriotic War monument, the statue of a soldier 35.5 metres (116ft) tall and weighing more than a Type 23 frigate (pictured below).

The two sailors concluded their three-day remembrance tour in Arkhangelsk on the White Sea, about 120 miles south of the Arctic Circle.

It too became a major base in the fight against the Bolsheviks – and cost the lives of more than 220 Servicemen.

They are remembered in Arkhangelsk Allied Cemetery, where there is a mixture of graves to the fallen and a series of memorial plaques to officers and men who are laid to rest in other parts of northern Russia.



Picture: LA(Phot) Dean Nixon

Physing along nicely

NOT only can they walk on water, but they can fly as well...

A Royal Marine demonstrates his agility as he celebrates completing one of the most physically-demanding courses in the Corps.

After 17 weeks of training, during which they received instruction in combat conditioning, anatomy, physiology and nutrition, gained qualifications including swimming pool life guard, and boxing and rugby league coaching, four green berets became physical training ('phys', pronounced 'fizz') instructors.

The course is not just physical – there's learning, paperwork, planning and organisation, such as helping to run the Inter-Services mountain bike championship. And being marines, it all has to be of the highest calibre.

"From day one, the mountain I had to climb was reiterated by the course instructor – there was only one standard, gold standard," said 29-year-old L/Cpl Stuart Brimacombe, from Surrey, one of the successful students at the Commando Training Centre in Lympstone, the Corps' alma mater.

"This high standard is

Attractive Alliance

THE £7m pumped into restoring Britain's only WW2-era submarine reaped instant rewards as HMS Alliance doubled visitor numbers in a year.

More than 100,000 people toured the boat – and the rest of the Royal Navy Submarine Museum – in Gosport, up from just 43,000 visitors in 2013.

Alliance re-opened in April 2014 after the appeal to help bring the A-class boat back to the state she was when she entered service just after the end of the war.

When the two-and-a-half-year restoration project was completed, bosses at the National Museum of the Royal Navy – the umbrella for various Naval Service museums – predicted a 20 per cent rise in numbers.

Alliance was built for action in the Pacific, but the war ended before she was finished.

Instead the boat had a three-decade career as a Cold War warrior before being placed on cradles in the early 80s as centrepiece of the museum.

Thirty years later and the boat was in desperate need of restoration – carried out with a mix of lottery cash and fund-raising/donations.

As well as making the 281ft boat look pristine outwardly, her innards were given a new look with her attack periscope restored to working order and sections of the boat recreating the periods in which she served.

● www.submarine-museum.co.uk/hms-alliance



Picture: In Harding, Air International

No better place

LOOKS like a Merlin. Just off the craggy Lizard Peninsula like a Merlin. Looking for submarines, just like a Merlin.

Not a Merlin. This is a Dutch NH90 making use of the Merlin's favourite playground.

Three helicopters from 7 (NL) Squadron swapped their home in the Netherlands for three weeks in Cornwall working with their British equivalents.

The NH90s and 60 air and ground crew decamped from their base at De Kooy airfield near Den Helder to RNAS Culdrose for some training with the Flag Officer Sea Training (FOST) along the coast in Devonport.

"It's an absolutely brilliant area to train in," said Dutch support officer Lt Pieter Agema.

"We've been coming here every six months for a good many years now and we always get a very warm welcome from our British hosts.

"We are here primarily to train our aircrew for front-line service with the Fleet. Culdrose has always proved to be an excellent base for everything we need to do and offers a happy environment to do it in."

The Dutch also took the opportunity to assess some of the new equipment carried onboard their helicopters.

Not only were they training up observers and aircrewmembers to manage the systems, they were looking to make use of the busy exercise areas off Plymouth, used by FOST to prepare British and foreign vessels for deployments.

With Culdrose being the home of the grey Merlins (green troop-carriers are based at Yeovilton) the three-month stint in Cornwall also allowed combined anti-submarine hunting – the two helicopters and their roles are similar, although Merlin is heavier and longer, while the NH90 is about 20mph faster.

"Working together with the Royal Navy and hunting real submarines is a great bonus for us and our training – you can't get this kind of training anywhere else in Europe, but you can here," said Lt Agema.

"And Cornwall is fantastic. It's a real privilege to be here. It's a beautiful place for walking along the coastal paths and biking in the summer when the weather's really nice – and in the winter when it's not, it's still beautiful."

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Hide and peek

In March last year we visited a £1m new training facility in the final stages of construction at HMS Raleigh. Dubbed 'ship in a box' – now officially renamed MV Vindictive – it's being used to prepare board and search teams for front-line duties around the globe. **RICHARD HARGREAVES** watched as sailors from HMS Sutherland and Richmond were put through their paces.

Aboard the merchantman MV Vindictive, somewhere off the coast of Liberia...

IT'S been two days since HMS Sutherland picked up a mayday from the Vindictive saying she was under attack from pirates in the Gulf of Guinea.

Carrying a cargo of cobalt ore from the Congo, there's been no further news from her since – but she's continuing on her way to Cadiz in Spain as scheduled.

Something aboard is clearly not right, but she's agreed to allow Sutherland's boarding team to inspect her.

The bulk of her crew are mustered on the quarterdeck, while the first mate stands next to a rope ladder, peering over the side as a Royal Navy Boarding Team member, weighed down with 50lb of kit, clambers up from the sea boat 20 or so feet below.

At the top of the ladder, the sailor directs the mate to stand a few feet away, keeping his gun aimed squarely at the sailor.

Clear.

The next sailor struggles up the ladder, then takes up position guarding the walkway.

Clear.

And so it goes on until a dozen 'boarders', armed with pistols and carbines, are safely aboard.

The clock is now running. This is bingo time: 30 minutes to secure a vessel, to make sure it is safe for all Royal Navy personnel to move around and carry out the real task: the search.

"In these first 30 minutes your eyes are everywhere," explains Lt Harry Harwood, Officer in Charge of the RN Board and Search School.

"The Royal Navy boarding team gather the intelligence and try to build a rapport with the target vessel."

Most of the crew have been mustered on the quarterdeck, while the Vindictive's first mate greets one of the boarding team. Personal effects – wallets, phones – are placed in a plastic bag while crew are searched, even down to being scanned by the 'hoodlum', a black bar metal detector.

The questioning is polite but firm. The situation isn't necessarily hostile – but it is always uncertain.

"You are the face of the Royal Navy – and an ambassador for your country," says Lt Harwood. "Yes, you've got a job to do, but you must be polite, courteous, helpful. You don't want to be heavy-handed on a compliant boarding."

So name, age, port of origin and destination, cargo, and so on. Only when the first mate has been thoroughly questioned does he lead the search team to the bridge – and the search can begin in earnest.

It's now that Vindictive comes into its own. Until the middle of last year the RN had nothing like it.

Melded from 21 ISO containers, Vindictive – also known as 'ship in a box' – recreates, in rudimentary form, the superstructure of a merchantman featuring switchboards, control panels, boilers, bunk beds, mess areas, galley.

The designers also created 170 hidey holes from false bulkheads and compartments to small boxes underneath machinery.

That – and the latest intelligence and reports from board and search teams fed back into the school at HMS Raleigh – makes ship in a box the most realistic (and probably ugliest – it's not a thing of beauty on the shore of St John's Lake) addition to recent board and search training.

Until now, on dry land our boarding teams have used the nearby Cossack building (named after the destroyer involved in storming the German tanker Altmark in 1940) where the upper floor (very loosely) doubles as a ship's bridge with a handful of cabins for the crew. It's small, not very realistic and it's hard to immerse trainees in the real life world of board and search.

So Vindictive is a big step up. More than 300 sailors will use it every year – plus officers from the UK Border Force, and Royal Marines undergoing training at Lympstone. "This is much more realistic – if only for its sheer size," says Lt Harwood.

Lead instructor PO Rattler Morgan adds: "This gives us massive flexibility right on our doorstep – there are so many hiding places built into it which is brilliant training."

Today, it's boarding teams from Sutherland and Richmond who are approaching the climax of the three-week course – with a scenario based on a real-life event. There's a red smear on a guard rail on one of the walkways, while outside one of the offices, there's a blood-encrusted axe. Vindictive was attacked by pirates.

The crew fought back, hacked them to death, then tossed the bodies overboard. It possibly explains why they're not being especially co-operative with Sutherland's sailors.

It's at this point you realise that boarding teams aren't just boarding teams. They're investigators. Evidence gatherers – you could call them CS Aye (sorry).

And whilst this particular exercise is somewhat out of the ordinary, most of the methodology isn't, such as keeping the crew together on the quarterdeck, the thorough questioning, the standing on a hatch to stop anyone coming up from below, the finger-tip search of compartments for those hiding places, the block on changes of course and radio communications without permission.

Any suspicious object – a 'Find' – is put into a bag which is promptly sealed.

"It's about chain of evidence – documenting anything suspicious, taking photographs, recording things, not touching objects and leaving your fingerprints behind," Lt Harwood explains.

The investigation only goes so far. These are sailors, not detectives and certainly not prosecutors.

Or as Lt Harwood puts up simply: "Don't tamper with the evidence. Collect it. Get the ship alongside. Let the local authorities deal with it."

Having found the bloodied axe, Sutherland and Richmond's sailors immediately realised something was amiss on the Vindictive.

Which is exactly what Harry Harwood was hoping for. After three weeks of constant instruction the 15-strong search party is now a "swept-up team who know how each other will act."

What they don't know, however, is how the crew will react.

"On every boarding there's going to be something you haven't foreseen," Harry continues.

"You may train for 22 years and never fire your weapon in anger. If you are in board and search, you will carry out your job pretty much as soon as you sail."

Which won't be all that long for either Sutherland's or Richmond's crew...

Picture: Dave Sherfield, HMS Raleigh

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Pictures: L(Phot) Jay Allen, HMS Protector



P-p-Protector picks up pieces polluting penguin paradise

FUEL and film reels were among the final items of recently-rediscovered rubbish removed from an island in the Antarctic by personnel aboard HMS Protector.

The ice patrol ship was tasked by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to clear items from Brabant Island, which had been left when a British expedition had to leave the British Antarctic Territory in a hurry 30 years ago.

The original team, taking part in a two-year adventurous training expedition, were quickly evacuated from the island when one of their number broke a leg.

During the past two years personnel from Protector have visited all of the sites on the island to remove several tonnes of rubbish, including clothing, ration packs, steel and even huts, which had been exposed to 30 years of storm-force winds, not to mention thousands of penguins.

Protector crossed Drake's Passage and sailed through an ice field to get to Brabant Island but that was the easy part, according to the ship's Executive Officer Lt Cdr Jason Varty.

"Brabant Island is not charted in the same way as the Lake District or Snowdonia," he said. "GPS wasn't in regular use at the time of the expedition and the locations were based on 30-year-old memories of expedition members."

Working closely with the leaders of the original team proved to be very helpful and memories were found to be correct as, despite the movement of glaciers, Protector quickly located the camps.

The final site, Metchnikoff Point, had been located early last year by a team of Royal Marines and RN personnel led by Lt Cdr Varty.

They bagged up all of the items but bad weather meant they could not get them to the ship, hence the need to return at the end of last year.

The rubbish had been bagged up but was buried under six feet of snow.

After it had been located and dug out it was transported to a landing site where RN divers took the bags to HMS Protector.

Lt Cdr Varty said: "I have visited

Brabant Island four times in the last two years and I find it extremely satisfying that we have finally returned the island back to its original state. Everyone on board has worked hard to achieve this."



Newly-qualified ice pilot Lt Nick Tate saw HMS Protector through the ice for the first time in the Gerlache Strait, which separates the Palmer Archipelago from the Antarctic Peninsula

"Conditions were relatively benign and it was more a test of my shiphandling abilities as I negotiated my way between some relatively small pieces of ice (between the size of a small car and small house) and large slabs of broken up ice," he said.

However the benign conditions were not to remain as the wind quickly picked up to 45kts, gusting 50kts.

"After a few hours dodging the smaller bits of ice, as well as the odd iceberg, we arrived at the entrance to the picturesque Lemaire Channel (a strait off Antarctica, between Kiev

Peninsula in the mainland's Graham Land and Booth Island) which, on first sighting, appeared to be full of ice," said Lt Tate.

The only way through glacial ice is to head straight for it and Protector's strengthened ice-breaking bow rode upon the ice and broke it away with surprising ease.

"Once we had entered the channel it was a case of finding the best way through – avoiding the bigger pieces of ice, and icebergs, and heading for the ice that is easiest to break," said Lt Tate.

"Progress as the ship broke its way through the ice was slow and the ice caused the whole ship to shudder and vibrate.

"There were loud cracking noises as the ice broke around us as well as the noise of bits of ice bumping against the hull.

"Looking aft, the ice closed back in as though it had never been moved, the only signs that we had ever been there were a few red marks on the ice where it had rubbed against the paintwork.

"There are many different aspects to icebreaking, whether in open ice and driving around it, sheet ice where

the ice has to be broken constantly, or driving through packs of ice.

"All of which require a great deal of concentration for the bridge team but makes for an interesting and gratifying daily challenge and is truly an experience like no other."

HMS Protector, which sailed from Portsmouth in October 2013, has spent the Austral Summer in the ice underpinning the UK's commitment to the Antarctic Treaty and providing logistic support to sites across the Peninsula, South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands.

She conducts patrols on behalf of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, surveys for the Hydrographic Office and provides logistic support to the British Antarctic Survey.

On completion of work periods in Antarctica last year, she visited Punta Arenas, Chile, Balboa, Panama and transited the Panama Canal before undergoing a technical maintenance period of work in Charleston, South Carolina, ahead of her Humanitarian Aid Disaster Relief Operation and Survey tasking in the Caribbean.

Protector will return to her new homeport of Devonport for the first time in May 2015.



Hitting new highs

WHERE did 2014 go? Last year went in the blink of an eye and delivered another year of growth for the charity.

We are delighted that you gave us ever-increasing levels of support to help our fundraising hit new highs. It's just as well, as so did our grant-making! More money was pumped out than ever before to make that extra bit of difference.

In 2014 over £3,000,000 in amenity grants was given by our group of charities; over £120,000 in prizes and awards; and (very sadly) nearly £500,000 to support bereaved families.

Our work is ever more in demand. Add to that the £4,000,000 we gave to charities to aid their crucial work and you can see the size of the mission that we have.

A new strategy puts us ever closer to understanding the need that we are here to help with. You are telling us to focus on families and their wellbeing. We hear that and are responding. Our largest amenities grant in 2014 – totalling £100,000 – was awarded to the China Fleet Club just before Christmas.

Everyone at the charity is starting the new year with rejuvenated enthusiasm but realise that more is needed as money gets ever tighter. We cannot do all our great work without the wonderful help that we get from our supporters, young and old, serving and veteran. To all of you, thank you.

I wish you and your family a happy new year, and all the best for 2015.

Robert Robson
Chief Executive
The Royal Navy and
Royal Marines Charity



● Lt Jonny Hamlyn high fives with young visitors to the ship during the Star Spangled Spectacular in Baltimore

Americans dig deep

HMS ARGYLL has looked to support the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity during her Caribbean deployment, raising more than £1,700.

A particular success was her visit to Baltimore where the ship raised over \$2,100 in four days.

The ship's company have also taken part in charity bike rides in Bermuda and raised money with many other activities.

During HMS Argyll's visit to Baltimore, as part of the *Star Spangled Spectacular* celebrations, the ship was open to visitors for a four-day period which attracted well over 5,000 guests.

WO1 Tim Hamlyn, the Executive WO onboard HMS Argyll, said: "We knew, following the hospitality given to us, that the American public held us in great esteem, but nobody predicted such generosity. We are extremely grateful that they have dug deep into their pockets for the RNRMC."

"I knew we could capitalise on the event and made contact with the RNRMC prior to deploying requesting collection buckets and small items such as wristbands to give away."

"As you can guess, I'm very happy with how it went."

Take the long road to Twickers again

A NEW year, a new challenge. Our Road to Twickenham campaign is back – and this year we're pushing the boat out to make 2015 the best yet.

For the uninitiated, our challenge tasks you with traversing the equivalent distance of your workplace, ship, unit, or even gym club, to Twickenham Stadium, TW2 7BA, before the big Army v Navy rugby showdown on May 9.

You may choose to run, row, ride, swim – or use any other means of physical activity – to reach the stadium.

For example, if you are serving in Portsmouth, you could jump on the rowing machine and take on 80 miles.

Or, if you are the spouse of a Serviceman in Helensburgh, you could ride 443 miles with your cycling club. You could do this

individually or as part of a team.

Fundraising co-ordinator Hilary Jukes said: "Road to Twickenham is one of our favourite campaigns because it's so easy for everyone to be involved, no matter your level of fitness."

"Last year our Servicemen and women were really creative, climbing ropes and taking on 'reverse jailbreaks' to make up their miles. This year we'd love to see the same initiative – and also see more entries from non-serving personnel."

"Royal Naval friends, families, ex-serving personnel and local businesses are equally welcome to join in, have fun, get fit and raise cash in the process."

To join the Road to Twickenham, set up a Virgin Money Giving fundraising page at bit.ly/RTT15 or contact fundraising@rnrmc.org.uk for more information.



● PTIs from HMS Collingwood took part last year

News in brief

■ THE Lord Mayor of Portsmouth's charity Valentine's Day ball takes place at Portsmouth Guildhall on February 14. The black-tie event includes a three-course meal and entertainment from The Dance Band of HM Royal Marines Portsmouth. Tickets £45 each or £400 for a table of 10. Contact Marcella on 07795 660853.

■ DONATIONS from the Admiralty Service held in St Martin in the Fields – the Admiralty Church, London – raised more than £1,300 for the RNRMC.

■ AHOY me hearties! Service children at RNAS Culdrose are to benefit from the repair and refurbishment of an on-site pirate boat play area, following a £4,000 grant from the RNRMC.

■ A ROYAL Naval Division Commemorative Dinner held by Royal Naval Reserve division Ceres at Headingley Carnegie Stadium in Leeds raised over £1,000 in donations. Music was provided by The Band of HM Royal Marines and Professor Eric Grove was guest speaker.

Trafalgar run

PERSONNEL at HM Naval Base Clyde held a charity fun run on Trafalgar Day.

Around 70 sailors, marines and civilians pounded the pavements of the military site on October 21, completing a 5km course to not only commemorate the Battle of Trafalgar but to raise £648.50 for the RNRMC.



● The Massed Bands of HM Royal Marines will play in London

Book your seat for festival

AFTER a series of monumental performances in the 350th Anniversary year of the Royal Marines, the Mountbatten Festival of Music is back for 2015.

The Massed Bands of Her Majesty's Royal Marines will perform over three nights at the Royal Albert Hall from April 16-18.

Tickets start from £25 and are available from royalalberthall.com.

The series of concerts display the outstanding versatility of some of the world's finest military

musicians and feature a wide range of musical styles, including music from the big screen and superb solo items.

There really is something for everyone as the Royal Marines display their incredible musicianship and pageantry.

And of course the festival would not be complete without the traditional marches and overtures that have proved such a hit with audiences over the years.



**GO THE DISTANCE!
MAKE EVERY MILE COUNT!**

You can help us whatever you are in the world by taking part in a run, row, swim or cycle.

Your challenge is to cover the number of miles you are from Twickenham before the Army v Navy rugby game. For example, if you are based in Portsmouth, you could row 80 miles. If you are based in Lynnhaven you could cycle 180 miles. You could do this individually or as part of a team, with your starting point being your unit, ship's current location or your affiliated town. Raising sponsorship will help your charity care for you, your family and oppes.

Register now and measure up to the challenge! Search 'Road to Twickenham' on the Virgin Money Giving website or contact fundraising@rnrmc.org.uk T: 023 9254 8288

Registered charity in England number 1070701 and Scotland 10045007.

the road to
TWICKENHAM

rnrmc.org.uk/events/roadtotwickenham



FUNDRAISER OF THE MONTH

HMS COLLINGWOOD



Staff and trainees at HMS Collingwood raised over £3,000 for the RNRMC and other local charities.

The boxing squad completed a 24-hour padathon, three PTIs cycled 373 miles from Dover to Falmouth in just four days, and Phase 2 trainees from Victory Squadron held a bucket collection at Portsmouth Football Club. Thanks!

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Trustees sought for RNBT

THE Royal Naval Benevolent Trust is looking for seven new trustees.

A founding principle of the Trust is that it is predominantly run by those who are serving or have served as non-commissioned sailors and Royal Marines.

Currently eleven of the 17 trustees who form the RNBT's governing body are drawn from serving or retired personnel.

The vacancies will occur from April 1 2015 as part of the charity's routine governance refreshment programme.

The election of volunteers will happen in the first week of March.

The charity helps those who are serving or have served as Warrant Officers or below in the RN and RM and their dependants who find themselves in need or distress.

Thousands of applicants are helped by the charity each year.

Anyone wishing to find out more information should visit www.rnbt.org.uk or contact the RNBT's Portsmouth-based HQ on 023 9269 0112.

Application packs can be applied for at rnbt@rnbt.org.uk.

The closing date is February 28.

Rose gift from royal

PRINCESS Alexandra visited the SSAFA Royal Homes at Queen Alexandra's Court, Wimbledon, to plant a rose bush using the same spade that had been used by her great grandmother, Queen Alexandra over 100 years ago.

The Princess Alexandra of Kent commemorative rose replaced a Red Oak tree that had been struck down in last winter's storms.

The fallen tree had been planted in 2005 – again, using the very same spade and in exact same spot – by Princess Alexandra to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Homes.

The Queen Mother had also used the spade to plant a Norwegian Maple tree back in 1973 to celebrate the re-opening of Queen Elizabeth Court, following reconstruction, which still flourishes today.

The spade had first been used by Queen Alexandra on July 15 1905, to plant a tree on the top lawn, to mark the official opening of The Queen Alexandra Homes.

A keen gardener and rose grower herself, the Princess was delighted to be invited back to the SSAFA Royal Homes to meet the residents and plant the rose, and remarked that she looks forward to hearing how it is doing in a year or two's time.

Marines sign up for Ivy's army

CHILDREN from a Portsmouth school running to help a classmate's sister enlisted the help of two Royal Marines.

Charlie Weir's sister Ivy, one, has cystic fibrosis and he and his friends at College Park Infant School at North End, ran the 1.5k children's Great South Run as Ivy's Army.

Sporting camouflage paint and caps the team asked two Royal Marines to join the team, along with Ivy's parents Gemma and Mathew for a photograph at the end of the event.

Justin Rich and Aled Jones were only too happy to oblige and were then inspired to take part in a straw-breathing selfie campaign.

The Breathe With Me Strawfie challenge has been launched in aid of the Cystic Fibrosis Trust, in their 50th anniversary year.

Gemma Weir said: "How fantastic that they have done that and helped to draw people's attention to our cause."

Anyone who wishes to donate can do so at: <https://www.justgiving.com/teams/IvysArmy>.

For more details about the strawfie campaign visit www.breathewithme.info



● Marines Justin Rich and Aled Jones with Mathew, Ivy and Gemma Weir and pupils from College Park Infant School who ran to raise funds for the Cystic Fibrosis Trust

URNU students rise to charity challenge

A GROUP of students from Bristol URNU handed over a cheque for £1,300 during a visit to the Children's Hospice South West.

The hospice is one of the unit's affiliated charities and four students visited for a tour.

Mid Strickland said: "It was quite overwhelming actually, I didn't really know what to expect but they really have thought of everything to make the family's life easier."

The unit raised the cash from a charity auction and the Padstow Dash.

The charity auction is an event held at the URNU in which unit members put forward opportunities or items to be bid for.

This year items up for auction included a day as (unofficial) CO of HMS Dasher, a bread-baking workshop by an aspiring chef, a two-day trip on a submarine, a bagpipe lesson and a roast dinner for two.

The Padstow Dash is a yearly charity "jailbreak"-style exercise from Padstow to Bristol



● Mid Chahal, Mid Crouch, Mid Ballard, Mid Bassingdale and Mid Cooper won the most imaginative form of transport in Padstow (the invisible Maxus/ibus) for the Padstow Dash

departing at 0800, arriving in Bristol no later than 1900.

The aim is to develop individual leadership and teamwork skills, whilst strengthening unit cohesion and raising funds for charity.

Students are required to complete a set of team challenges and arrive in Bristol as quickly as

possible in order to win. This year current unit members competed against a team of returning unit members.

The competition was won by the current unit member team, arriving four minutes and 30 seconds ahead of their competitors and collecting only a few more points along the way.

Challenges included taking a picture of yourself; with Concorde; surfing at Fistral Beach; with your entire team in a phone box; visiting Doc Martin's house and taking the most imaginative form of transport.

Money was raised through sponsorship as well as donations from passers-by.



● Mid Partridge and Mid Bone with the produce of the baking masterclass

Trio's recipe for success

SAILORS from HMS Bulwark raised more than £500 for charity by enjoying delicious cakes made by three of their shipmates during their four-month Cougar deployment.

The sponges, brownies, shortbread, scones and cupcakes were made by keen amateur baker PO 'Taff' Churches, with the able assistance of POs David Austin and Nadine Kelly.

The Petty Officers' Mess chose Butterwick Hospice based in Durham, HMS Bulwark's affiliated city, as their adopted charity and the cake sale is one of a series of events to raise money staged throughout the deployment.

The Butterwick Charity maintains three hospices supporting patients of all ages and their families in the North East of England.

Taff's regular job onboard is as a weapons engineer technician, so baking cakes for a day in the galley was an



● The cake sale in the PO Mess

enjoyable change from looking after the ship's satellite communications systems.

He said: "The cake sale was a brilliant event from start to finish. The three of us had a really good day making the cakes and the ship's company enjoyed eating them."

Ball boys walk 189 miles

THREE Naval personnel are walking 189 miles from Twickenham to Cardiff for the Wales v England Six Nations fixture on February 6.

CPO Andy Gibbs, CPO Tyrone Stock and Royal Marine C/Sgt Andy Crofts are carrying the match ball for the clash.

They are assisted by James Cameron-Wood, a veteran with 29 years' RN Service, who is now working at the House of Lords, and Georgina Crumpton, who works in Canary Wharf.

The trio, who set out on January 28, are being sponsored by Heineken, Essex Ford and Towergate Wilson. All cash raised will go to Help For Heroes.

CPO Gibbs, who along with C/Sgt Crofts is based at HMS Excellent, said: "We continually go the extra mile to help support H4H fundraising activities because we are driven by a debt of gratitude that we owe all the British Servicemen and women who selflessly



● CPO Gibbs and James Cameron-Wood (in costume) with Welsh winger Alex Cuthbert

protect us from the challenges thrown down by today's world."

You can follow their progress on Twitter @TEAMDIFH or Facebook www.facebook.com/doingitforheroes. They also will be blogging at www.doingitforheroes.blogspot.co.uk

To donate visit www.bmycharity.com/doingitforheroes

Charity Snippets

● ROYAL Navy engineers at HMS Sultan gathered on the establishment's parade ground for a series of timed helicopter pulls for Children In Need.

Organised by members of the Royal Navy Air Engineering and Survival School, teams from throughout HMS Sultan took it in turns to make timed runs whilst pulling a Sea King helicopter from one end of the parade ground to the other.

The Defence School of Marine Engineering, the Executive Department, civilian engineers from eDF Energy and Network Rail, based within the Babcock Academy, also took part.

● THE Warrant Officers and Senior Rates Mess (WOSRM) at HMS Collingwood made a £300 donation to help fund a new CO₂ machine at Queen Alexandra (QA) Hospital.

Mess member Lyn Harrison's daughter Denise benefited from the use of a CO₂ during a recent visit to the hospital.

● STAFF at the Royal Star & Garter Home were delighted that the Solihull Home's Roundel Wing was awarded Level 1 status, following an unannounced dementia care audit by Dementia Care Matters. Level 1 is the highest accolade achievable and indicates that the home is demonstrating exceptional person-centred dementia care.

● MEMBERS of SSAFA's Bereaved Families Support Group have released hundreds of balloons in memory of loved ones lost through military service.

The act of remembrance took place during a special memorial service at Loughborough's Carillon and War Memorial.

● THREE Royal Navy PTs from HMS Collingwood cycled most of the length of the South Coast in four days in support of four charities.

The trio, CPO Leona Young, PO Ian Robinson and LPT Ian Cole, cycled 600km from Dover to Falmouth to raise funds for the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity, Royal Naval Benevolent Trust, Royal Navy and Royal Marines Children's Fund and Sudep Action.

● NATIONAL charity Royal British Legion Industries has been awarded £1.95m from the Armed Forces Covenant LIBOR Fund to develop 24 apartments at Aylesford, which will provide much-needed accommodation for single veterans.

The apartments will predominantly provide accommodation for single wounded, injured and sick veterans and will be fully adapted to provide long-term homes for veterans who have mobility needs.

● MAJOR Charles Jenkins of the Army Intelligence Corps is a keen supporter of The Royal Star & Garter Homes. Not one to shy away from a challenge, his latest self-imposed mission is to row 3,650km over the next year (or 10km per day), to raise funds for the charity.

Maj Jenkins began his latest challenge on his birthday, November 4, by bringing in his Concept 2 rowing machine to the Surbiton Home for the residents to watch.

● THE Band of HM Royal Marines Portsmouth, in conjunction with the RM Charitable Trust Fund, plans to stage a repeat of concerts previously staged in Exeter, Chichester and Coventry cathedrals focussing on the centenary of World War 1.

It takes place in Salisbury Cathedral on January 31 at 7.30pm.

Tickets are available from www.salisburyplayhouse.com

Cleared for flight path

Skilful work by LAETs

ROYAL Navy personnel returned to the Somerset Levels for the first time since helping with flood-relief work last year.

Members of 815 Squadron's 234 Lynx Flight, based at RNAS Yeovilton, spent a week working at Catcott Nature Reserve, building a boardwalk through an area of wet woodland.

The reserve is owned and managed by Somerset Wildlife Trust (SWT), a charity set up 50 years ago to protect the unique rural environment and provide the conditions needed for native species to flourish.

PO 'Fez' Parker said: "The trust had driven large wooden piles into the ground before we arrived and it was our job to create a framework perfectly level, and then top the frame with larch boarding.

"All the wood for the project comes from trees that are being cleared from another area of the trust's reserves, just a couple of miles away as the crow flies. This helped keep down the cost of the project and is obviously much better for the environment."

PO 'Julie' Andrews said: "It was a challenging week, not least because we were working in woodland while the remnants of hurricane Gonzalo blew through. At times the wind was so strong it was raining leaves!

"I've never really worked like this before; it was on an industrial scale with limited hand tools, miles away from anywhere.

"You might not immediately understand the benefit to the Navy of us doing things like this until you read in the *Navy News* that HMS Argyl's ship's



● LAET Gav Babb and LAET Shaun Cain form joists for the boardwalk

company deployed in Bermuda, helping to sort out the damage caused by the very same hurricane."

After only one day's work, it was clear that many more larch boards were required. The Royal Navy dispatched three sailors to the trust's workshop to cut, plane and bevel enough boards to last the week.

LAET Gav Babb said: "This has been great – doing something

new and challenging in a place like this. I'm really proud of what we've achieved here.

"I was hoping to see more wildlife but I guess the noise from the chainsaw scared them all away!"

AET Luke Farmery added: "I only joined the flight last week so it was the perfect opportunity for me to get to know everyone outside of normal work. I already feel like I know the guys well."

Eve Tigwell, Chairman of Somerset Wildlife Trust, said: "As a charity we rely heavily on volunteers to carry out a lot of essential work both on our reserves and in our offices. We are delighted that 815 Squadron has helped us for a second time.

"The work that 234 Flight has carried out in constructing the boardwalk at Catcott will mean that more people can access this wonderful reserve."



● Above: Work on the new boardwalk
● Below: The completed path



TWO Leading Air Engineering Technicians from RNAS Culdrose have scooped top awards at a prestigious national competition.

LAETs Aiden Campbell, of 824 NAS, and Mikala Atkinson, of 771 NAS, were selected for their outstanding application and exceptional military standards.

They attended the National Apprenticeship Awards held at the LG Arena in Birmingham to pick up their awards. In addition members of industry put their best trainees up against others within their respective fields as part of the World-Skills UK (WSUK) Finals.

LAET Campbell, who works on the Merlin Mk2, secured the gold medal through completing tasks that involved build and fault diagnosis on AC motors and the Merlin aircraft's AV control systems.

In the mechanical category his Culdrose counterpart LAET Atkinson claimed a silver medal for completing tasks including compressor blade blending, gas turbine boroscope techniques and hydraulic system design.

Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg was among the VIP guests to recognise the country's top apprentices and apprenticeship providers with 11 winners selected from over 1,400 entrants across British industries.

In addition a special award to commemorate the 100th anniversary of WW1 was presented to an apprentice from each of the three Armed Forces with AET Matthew Stanton, from HMS Sultan representing the Royal Navy.



NAVY NEWS

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Carriage for the captain

IT'S not every day you get carried from work on top of a Royal Navy Field Gun... but that was the honour bestowed on Capt Alistair Willis when he left HM Naval Base Clyde after 18 months.

Capt Willis had been appointed Captain of the Base and Deputy Naval Base Commander, and Captain HMS Neptune in May 2013 but has now left to take up a new post as Head of the Maritime Logistic Improvement Programme at Abbeywood near Bristol.

A firm champion of HMS Neptune's Field Gun Crew during his tenure at Clyde, he was thrilled when the lads decided to escort him and his wife, Sharon, off the base in such an unorthodox way.

He said: "Working at HMNB Clyde has been an absolute privilege and I move on with a heavy heart after a hugely enjoyable and yet challenging time at Faslane.

"I am particularly proud of and grateful for the close understanding, co-operation and teamwork between the Base, Helensburgh residents across Argyll and Bute and wider Scotland."

The new man at the helm is Capt James Hayes, who has worked in the United States on a number of submarine projects, before returning to the UK where he was responsible for running the Trident Equipment Programme before attending the Royal College of Defence Studies.

Medics dig for victory

PLYMOUTH-BASED Royal Navy medics have taken part in a team-building exercise to help restore historic walled gardens.

The 38 Navy medical staff, from HM Naval Base, Devonport, donned wellies and wielded spades and forks on a community project to prepare an historic fruit and vegetable garden for the winter season at Maristow Estate Walled Gardens on Maristow Estate north of Plymouth.

The aim was to strengthen their team and develop a long-lasting relationship between Jenny Tunley Price, who leases the 5.5-acre Victorian gardens, and who has vowed to restore them to their former glory.



● Angelina Jolie with members of the Armed Forces on the red carpet at the premiere of *Unbroken*. RN personnel pictured are: Airman Aaron Hunt, PO Ian Lane, Sub Lt Philippa Little and Wtr Leanne Miller
Pictures: © Dave Hogan

A Jolie great time on the red carpet

FLANKED by beaming Royal Navy sailors, soldiers and airmen, Academy Award winner Angelina Jolie walked the red carpet at Leicester Square's Odeon cinema for the premiere of her new film *Unbroken*.

Basking in the spotlight, the star-struck sailors flashed their best Hollywood smiles as the glamorous director gathered the uniformed group around her at the press launch.

Clearly having the time of their lives, Sub Lt Philippa Little, PO Ian Lane, Naval Airman Aaron Hunt and Wtr Leanne Miller were given the extraordinary chance to represent the Naval Service following an urgent call from the Royal British Legion asking for Forces personnel to support the film's UK premiere.

As the short notice call went out London's Naval Regional Commander selected the four from an eager list of volunteers.

"It was just surreal," said Sub Lt Little, 20, from Gosport, who works at Navy Command in Portsmouth.

"We all knew we'd never get the chance to do something like this again so we made the most of it. It was great that all the actors were wearing poppies to support the Royal British Legion."



● Actor Jack O'Connell with Service personnel at the premiere

Reservist PO Lane, who attends HMS King Alfred, the Portsmouth-based Naval Reserve Unit, said: "It was a great night. As I was standing there with Angelina with hundreds of flashes from cameras all around us, it seemed unbelievable that I was on the red carpet going to a film premiere.

"We were given very good seats and were treated with great respect from Angelina, the stars of the film and the general public."

Inside the theatre, Angelina paid tribute to the Royal British Legion and also thanked the two Chelsea Pensioners, Cecil Baker and James Walter Fellows, for coming along to support the premiere.

After the film Sub Lt Little said: "It was very good, a very different perspective on life as a prisoner of war at that time, quite a refreshing take on the subject and not like wartime films I've seen before."

Angelina directs and produces

the epic drama that follows the life of Olympian athlete and war hero Louis "Louie" Zamperini, played by Jack O'Connell. The film has been adapted from Laura Hillenbrand's book *Unbroken*.

PO Lane added: "Having never been invited to a film premiere before, I was delighted to be selected to represent the Royal Navy Reserve at this high-profile event.

"I know there were many of my colleagues who would have liked to have attended."

It's not rocket science

TRAINEE sailors at HMS Raleigh were given an insight into the benefits of good diet, regular exercise and medical checks as the key to living a healthy life.

The training base in Torpoint held a Healthy Living Fair attended by around 200 recruits undergoing their specialist training, and members of the ship's company.

With health-care professionals on hand the trainees were given advice on a number of medical issues including dental hygiene, vaccinations, cancer checks and how to quit smoking.

Ellie Mitchell, HMS Raleigh's civilian Dental Hygienist, said: "We've had a pretty good response. Most people wanted to know about tooth brushing because people never really get taught how to do it. It's nice being able to talk to all the recruits and go through everything with them in this sort of setting."

Chefs from the Defence Maritime Logistics School gave a cooking demonstration of healthy food choices including a tian of roasted peppers, curried lentils and cabbage as a substitute for rice, pasta or potatoes, and mouth-watering soups.

Trainee Chef Elliot Dunn, said: "The food was really nice. I've never tried pea and rocket soup before. It's not something I'd make, but it was really good."

Invite for women

ROYAL Navy personnel are being urged to take part in the British Association of Women Police annual awards ceremony.

BAWP co-ordinator Mandy Chapman, who is one of the first female police dog handlers in the UK, is inviting the RN to nominate female personnel for awards.

The initiative comes after RPO Cathryn Chambers and RPO Joanne Cattle attended the BAWP annual awards in 2014.

RPO Chambers represented the Naval Servicewomen's Network and used the event to forge links with officers from other forces in a bid to develop a strategy for sharing knowledge and good practice.

Delegates were keen to learn from and emulate the success of the network in relation to their own forces' women's networks.

Representatives from other forces have been invited to attend the network's conference later this year.

RPO Chambers said: "The event and the opportunities it has presented has introduced the RNP to a wide network of some truly inspirational women in very high positions within the UK policing family."

Ex-sailor's novel help

A FORMER sailor is donating some of the proceeds of his novel to three charities who help the military.

Charles Evans, who spent more than ten years in the Royal Navy, has written a thriller novel called *Falklands Revenge*.

Charles, who served on HMS Brilliant during the conflict in 1982, is donating money to Help for Heroes, the Royal British Legion and the South Atlantic Medal Association.

The novel is available from www.austinnmacauley.com.

It is also available for download in a Kindle e-book version at <http://www.amazon.co.uk/dp/B00PCSRH6K>

Sea day for families on St Albans



● Lt Rich Knight

MERLIN pilot Lt Rich Knight got a soaking to celebrate his 1,000th hour of flying.

The traditional drenching took place on the deck of HMS St Albans during a families visit.

Lt Knight, of 829 NAS, welcomed his father Dave, 58, and brother Matthew, 24, on board the Portsmouth-based ship for the journey from her home port to London.

The Type 23 frigate is the youngest of 13 specialist anti-submarine warfare vessels in the Royal Navy and it was the first time she put to sea with families since a year-long refit.

Naval veterans Paddy McClurg and Darren Shiels sailed with their sons, both weapon engineers. Paddy, 73, who joined the Royal Navy in 1956, said: "A lot has changed since my time in the Service, my

first ship had an open bridge, rum was on ration and I slept in a hammock. The technology on show in St Albans was terrific, especially in the ops room – a far cry from my last ship some 25 years ago."

Darren Shiels, 49, whose son Liam has represented the Royal Navy at boxing, was last at sea in the Royal Yacht Britannia, but also served in Type 21 frigates.

He said: "I really enjoyed the day in St Albans – there are elements of the ship that remind me of the Type 21s that I served in so it has been very nostalgic – but a lot has changed. We had no females at sea for a start."

AB(WS) Jessica Hudson, 32, was awarded a promotion to Local Acting Leading Seaman at the captain's table while her family looked on.



● Lt Knight aboard HMS St Albans



Join the parade

THE Royal Navy is leading on the Cenotaph Parade to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Gallipoli campaign on Saturday April 25.

RNA General Secretary Capt Paul Quinn said: "We have been invited to provide an RNA platoon of veterans to march alongside RN, Australian, New Zealand and Turkish serving and veterans."

"Muster at 1000 in Whitehall, and the service completes about 1130 for a march past."

"Please let Nigel [Huxtable] or me know if you would like to march – there will be no standards, by the way."

The first Naval involvement in the Gallipoli campaign was the bombardment of coastal defences in February 1915, and the final evacuation of troops was in January 1916.

Dublin dinner

MORE than 80 shipmates and their guests attended Dublin branch's Trafalgar Night dinner at the Royal Irish Yacht Club in Dun Laoghaire.

Amongst the guests were S/M Paul Quinn, General Secretary of the RNA, and his wife Liz, as well as S/M Dominick Chilcott, the British Ambassador to Ireland, and his wife Jayne.

Members and guests enjoyed a five-course meal, accompanied by speeches from both Capt Quinn, who proposed the toast to 'the Immortal Memory and those who fell with him', and the Ambassador.

Branch secretary S/M Nick Purkis presented the Ambassador with his RNA tie on behalf of the branch.

Sea Cadets support Brentwood branch

SEA Cadets were on hand to help the shipmates of Brentwood branch remember the fallen.

The branch standard and members attended the Royal Anglian Regiment Association service of remembrance at the regiment's chapel in Brentwood.

After the service Brentwood branch members were invited to join the Regimental Association lunch at the Army Reserve centre in the town – the RNA shipmates have a long

and happy association with the Chapel.

On Remembrance Sunday the branch took part in the Brentwood Borough parade, with the Sea Cadets of TS St Vincent, the Brentwood unit, again providing the escort to the standard in the form of two smart young cadets, Cdt Lucy Dekker and OC Harry Rowton.

In the parade the RNA detachment was immediately followed by the Sea Cadets led by their standard bearer, Cdt Sophia

Cracknell, who although very nervous impressed everybody by her performance of the duty.

On Armistice Day the standard and members were present at 11am for a short remembrance service at the War Memorial arranged by Brentwood RBL for schoolchildren.

After that shipmates could relax at a normal meeting, for which they were joined by guests from Romford and Dagenham branches.

Long wait for medal is over

A MEMBER of Nuneaton branch has been presented with a medal – nine years after he applied.

S/M John Harris, a former RN Radio Supervisor who served from 1953–1966, collected the Pingat Jasa Malaysia Medal, first announced in 2005 by the Government of Malaysia for veterans who served in operations in Malaya/Malaysia between August 1957 and August 1966.

John served at Kranji Wireless Station in Singapore from June 1963 to February 1965, and twice deployed into the Malaysian jungle to set up radio communications to monitor Indonesian fighters.

After leaving the Royal Navy John went to live in the United States, and it was from there that he applied for the medal.

Having heard nothing, he re-applied in 2006, but then moved on from New England to Virginia then back to Massachusetts before returning to England last April.

In October John received an email from a veteran volunteer on behalf of the MOD to say they had John's medal and thought he was still in America – they managed to trace him even though his email address had changed more than once.

The RNA felt it would be fitting for John, accompanied by his American wife Judith, to receive the medal on Thanksgiving Day.

Accordingly, on November 27, Nuneaton branch president S/M Bill Freeman presented the medal on to S/M John, and the branch celebrated with a traditional tot of rum followed by pumpkin pie and pumpkin cheesecake.

Centenary saluted

THE Australian Submarine Service have celebrated their centenary – including their close ties with the Royal Navy.

The programme culminated in a series of events in November – 'Submarine Week' – in which the Submariners Association Australia and members of the Submariners Association Australia branch, based in Fremantle, played their part.

The Australian Submarine Arm traces its origins to February 1914 and the arrival of the British-built submarines HMAS AE1 and AE2, complete with a complement of RN officers and crew, along with some Australian trainee submariners.

The latter served with distinction in World War 1, being the first Allied submarine to break through the Dardanelles during the Gallipoli campaign (earning the sobriquet 'the silent Anzac').

HMAS AE2 was scuttled in the Sea of Marmara after mechanical problems on April 30 1915.

Later British-built former RN boats included six J-class from 1919, followed by Oxley and

Otway in the late 1920s.

Australia bought six new Oberon-class boats from the UK in the 1960s, reinforcing the close connection with the RN Silent Service, with personnel on exchange in both countries and former RN personnel coming to Australia to serve in the RAN.

Thirty years on the RAN commissioned HMS Collins as the lead boat of the Type 471 class, designed by Swedish firm Kockums, to replace the ageing Oberons.

These six boats were built at

Port Adelaide, in South Australia, and the new class of boat also had a new base – the RAN Submarine HQ moved from HMAS Platypus, in Sydney, to HMAS Stirling, at Rockingham, south of Perth, in Western Australia.

"Also based at Stirling are the Submarine Training and Systems Centre and the Escape Training Facility, so our Association is in the perfect location," said S/M John Keating, president of the Submariners Association Australia branch.

"We have a great relationship

with our brothers in the Submariners Association Australia, which has branches in each state – some of our members belong to both associations, having also served in RAN submarines) & the Submarine Institute of Australia, which is also based in WA."

S/M Keating added: "Hats off to Sid Czabator, President of the SAA WA Branch 9 and his organising committee, for all their great work over Subweek."

"Everything went brilliantly – BZ!"

Doug pays tribute in Belgium

THE Secretary of Harrogate and District branch, S/M Doug Pointon, was invited to travel to Ypres in Belgium for the 2014 Centenary Parades, with the West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Services Band.

S/M Pointon was honoured to parade, with the band, on the night of November 10 for the 8pm ceremony at the Menin Gate in Ypres, the small town which was strategically vital to the Allies in World War 1 and which saw some of the fiercest fighting on the Western Front.

On November 11 he joined the main Armistice Day parade, where he laid a wreath on behalf of his branch at the Canadian War Memorial at St Julien

in the afternoon and, once again, at the Menin Gate for the 8pm Ceremony of Remembrance.

S/M Pointon, an ex-submariner, cannot remember when he last did so much marching ('shuffling') but his feet ached for two days afterwards.

The party later visited a number of other military sites, including Tyne Cot Cemetery, Buttes Wood New British Cemetery, Polygon Wood Cemetery, Langemark German Cemetery, Paschendaele and the World War 2 Canadian Cemetery at Groesbeek near Nijmegen, close to the German border, as the father of one of the band members was buried there.

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Rallying support

BRIDLINGTON branch and the local Royal British Legion were honoured to have one of the RNA's serving members, Sub Lt Phil Fordham (HMS Blyth), and his shipmate Sub Lt Hannah Murdoch (HMS Nelson) assist in the launch of the Poppy Appeal.

The Naval officers positioned themselves outside the Spa Theatre in Bridlington, where a scooter rally was taking place (pictured above) – but a lot of people visiting were queuing to buy poppies, not queuing to get in...

The officers stayed all day and helped to raise more than £2,400 on the launch day.

HQ open days

HEADQUARTERS open days will be held on the following dates this year – all of which are Fridays: April 10, May 15, July 3, August 21 and October 9.

Bookings are accepted on a first-come first-served basis, although priority will be given to any branch which has yet to attend an open day – contact Andy, Nigel or Chrissie if your branch would like to attend.

Visitors will need to arrive at HQ at 11am, which will allow enough time for refreshments, a sandwich lunch and then onto the boat for the harbour tour.

Some 30 branches have visited HQ since the programme began.

Goodbye, my friend

IN LATE November 1943 Sub Lt Geoff Helmore RNVR was the Junior Radar Officer in HMS Kent, flagship of the 1st Cruiser Squadron, Home Fleet.

The heavy cruiser was assigned to Arctic convoy escort duties, protecting vulnerable merchantmen from German raiders including Scharnhorst and Tirpitz, which lurked in Norwegian fjords.

"We were incredibly fortunate," said Geoff.

"Throughout our time with that duty, in that location, the weather was so appalling that the possibility of any form of enemy action was virtually negligible – unending storm-force winds, mountainous seas 30 to 60ft from troughs to crests, snowstorms and temperatures of -30°C and lower.

"The surface of the wildly disturbed sea, when you could see it in the Arctic winter darkness, appeared as a black, glutinous soup, and the battles to remove the constantly forming ice on the ship's structure unending."

S/M Geoff shared a cabin with Yorkshireman Sub Lt Jack Higginbotham.

"He was wonderful to me and was, throughout his life (he died in 1991) my firmest and closest friend," said S/M Geoff.

"We lost only three men during our two Arctic months



● The frozen foredeck of HMS Kent during World War 2 Arctic Convoy duties

Picture submitted by J T Edwards

– one overboard and two from hypothermia.

"We buried them at sea in the dark storm, which was a terrible experience.

"The memory of those days has lived with me ever since, particularly in the past ten years or so.

"My mind has revolved around foolish and unanswerable questions – with more than 3,000 men lost during the wartime Arctic convoys, why were some of us 'lucky' and some not?

"Has any suitable special event ever been staged to commemorate the deaths, and such ghastly deaths, of so many brave men?

"And how was it that I was not told of the death of my dear friend until well after his funeral?

"I never had the chance to take his hand, to say farewell and to thank him for his wonderful friendship."

Seeking closure, S/M Geoff decided that he needed to go to Nordkapp, one of the most

northerly points in Europe, "stand on the cape, look out over the Arctic Ocean and pay my respects to those 3,000 men and say farewell to Jack, my friend."

He made the Cape, 1,017ft above the cold, forbidding sea, in September 2013, when he and his wife visited Norway.

The only thing that had been stopping him was the considerable cost – that was until he had a chat with a fellow Arctic Star veteran.

Geoff was asked if he had tried the Big Lottery Fund Heroes Return scheme, which provides grants to help World War 2 veterans take part in commemorative visits and returns to places where they fought.

Geoff immediately contacted Heroes Return.

"They were most helpful," he said.

"They sent me an application form and advice, which I followed, and within a couple of months I had booked the trip, having been promised a grant, which turned out to be generous.

"If any ex-Service personnel reading this have a desire, as I did, may I suggest that they should not hesitate in getting in touch," said S/M Geoff.

"I have my 'closure' and have paid my respects and my mind is so much more at ease at last."

www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/heroesreturn

Heritage sites visited

PERSHORE and District branch and the town abbey welcomed guests from the local Remember The Fallen Association on their inaugural outing.

Dr Judy Dale, Church Warden of the abbey, was on hand to provide information and the group were delighted to be shown memorabilia about the war memorial, including the history of Pershore's memorials – carried out by the late Marshall Wilson – which can be bought from the abbey.

Amongst the guests was the founder of the Remember The Fallen website, Sandra Taylor, who has spent more than 15 years researching local war memorials and painstakingly documenting all the history of the men and women named who died during both world wars.

In 1999 Mrs Taylor became a volunteer fieldworker for the National Inventory of War Memorials (NIWM) and began recording and transcribing the war memorials in Worcester and the surrounding area.

Once this appeared to be completed, Sandra decided that the names she had recorded deserved to be researched in order to 'bring to life' those commemorated rather than just remaining as a

name carved on a memorial.

This has resulted in a wealth of information and memorabilia that is now freely available to the public via the internet, thanks to generous support from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Mrs Taylor has also been heavily involved in the restoration and rededication of many memorials around the county.

Also in the visiting party were members of the Worcestershire & Sherwood Foresters Regimental Association Worcester branch who, after attending many services in the abbey, enjoyed the opportunity to study the beautiful historic building at a more leisurely pace.

They were escorted by RNA branch secretary S/M Trudy Burge who, as well as knowing the veterans, struck up a friendship with Mrs Taylor whilst undertaking historical research on Pershore men involved in the Great War.

The visitors then moved on to Pershore Heritage Centre, where they saw a range of memorabilia before being welcomed by the rest of Pershore RNA branch for lunch at Pershore Naval Social Club.

www.rememberthefallen.co.uk

Conference is heading to Reading

THE votes are in – and it looks like shipmates will be heading to the Thames Valley for the National Conference in 2016.

Branches were asked to send in their preferences for next year's event, and the two front-runners turned out to be Perth in central Scotland and Reading.

And with the latter garnering more than three times the level of support of Perth, Reading will be the venue for 2016, organised by

Area 3.

This year's event is hosted by Area 2 at the 550-room Grand Burstin Hotel overlooking the harbour in Folkestone – part of the Britannia Group, as is the Royal Court Hotel in Coventry, venue for last year's Conference.

Shipmates are also reminded that the deadline for submitting branch motions for this year's Conference is fast approaching.

Such documents have to

be with Association General Secretary Capt Paul Quinn at RNA Headquarters by February 27, and in order to qualify for consideration it has to be certified that a properly recorded and valid branch vote has been passed and counter-signed by a seconding branch.

"Therefore if you want to get a motion to Conference you need to get a wiggle on," said Capt Quinn.

Welshpool aiming for the tops

SHIPMATES from Welshpool branch have been hitting the heights in their pursuit of challenging outdoor pursuits.

Early autumn last year saw members of branch climbing Cadair Idris in north-west Wales – at 893m it is almost 200m below the height of Snowdon, but can be a more difficult climb.

This was followed in October by a shorter, but more relevant, climb up to Rodney's Pillar, atop the 365m Breidden Hill near Welshpool.

The pillar is a monument to Admiral Rodney, a prominent Naval commander during the 18th century, victor at the Battle of the Saintes (1782).

More recently the branch climbed Moel Y Gofa (403m) in fine late-autumn weather.

This sudden zest for outdoor pursuits is something of a recent extension of the branch's social activities.

The madder members of the branch have suggested future activities such as entering a home-made raft in the Mersey River Festival raft race, or setting a triathlon challenge for other veterans associations to match – some branch members allegedly hope those making such suggestions will go and lie down in a darkened room...

Ambassador officiates

ARCTIC Convoy veterans in Northern Ireland have been awarded Russian Ushakov Medals to mark their heroism and endeavours 70 years ago.

The veterans gathered with their families and friends at Belfast Harbour Commissioner's Offices where Russian Ambassador Dr Alexander Yakovenko presented more than 20 medals in a ceremony opened by the Duchess of Abercorn, founder of the Pushkin Trust.

The Arctic Convoys are directly credited with helping the Soviet Union resist Hitler's forces – more than 3,000 seamen died on 78 convoys which delivered more than four million tonnes of cargo during World War 2.

Parade change

PLEASE note that the date of the Biennial Parade in London has been brought forward by a week and will now take place on Sunday September 6.

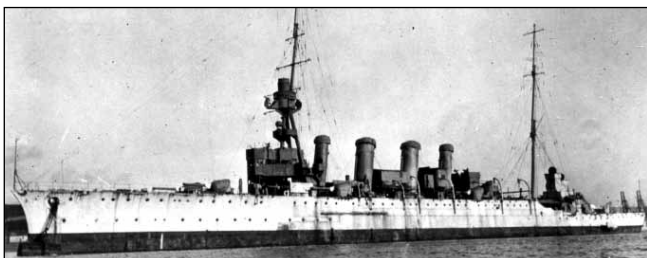
↓ RNA HQ, Room 209, Semaphore Tower (PP70), HM Naval Base, Portsmouth PO1 3LT.

↓ admin@royalnavalassoc.com

↓ 023 9272 3747

↓ www.royal-naval-association.co.uk

£50 PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery ship in our November edition (right) was RFA Black Ranger, which in its civilian guise was named Petrola XIV or 14. The winning answer was provided by Mr N Pardoe, of Shropshire.

This month's ship (above) was a World War 1 light cruiser that made a name for herself by becoming the first warship to kill an enemy U-boat.

(1) What was her name, and (2) what was the pennant number of the U-boat that she sank?

Complete the coupon and send it to Mystery Picture, Navy News, Navy Command, Leach Building, HMS Excellent, Portsmouth PO2 8BY. Coupons giving the correct answers will go into a prize draw to establish a winner. The closing date for entries is February 11.



More than one entry can be submitted but photocopies cannot be accepted. Do not include anything else in your envelope: no correspondence can be entered into and no entry returned.

The winner will be announced in our March edition. The competition is not open to Navy News employees or their families.

MYSTERY PICTURE 239

Name

Address

My answers: (1)

(2)



Visit to Yeovilton

TWO Commando Helicopter Force squadrons hosted a visit by 40 Sea and Army Cadets from Yeovil, Castle Cary and Bruton.

Also there were members of the Wincanton and District Royal British Legion youth section – the RBL has provided sterling support to the Force for years.

845 and 847 Naval Air Squadrons, based at Yeovilton, organised the day with the aim of giving cadets an opportunity to learn more about the work carried out by the 'Jungle' squadrons and the Royal Navy.

The visit began with a briefing from Lt Philip Wray on the training, equipment and role of 845 NAS, followed by a look around the Sea King Mk4 – one of the last chances, as the squadron will be switching to the Merlin Mk3.

The visitors then moved to 847 NAS for a briefing from Lt James Nottingham on the role of the squadron and their new Wildcat helicopters, which was followed by a hangar tour and a chance to clamber aboard a Wildcat for a good look round.

A tour of the Somerset air station and an unexpected flying display from the Lynx Mk8 of 815 NAS and the Royal Navy Historic Flight rounded the visit off in style.

Piped aboard

SEA Cadets from Huntingdon unit ceremonially piped the guest of honour, Vice Admiral Alan Richards, Chief of Defence Intelligence, aboard at JFC Wyton for the establishment's Trafalgar Night dinner.

The cadets also gave a display of drumming for the diners.

Jersey gun-pull yields record charity haul

EACH year staff and cadets from Jersey unit spend a day pulling a replica field gun, weighing just under a quarter of a ton, in relay teams some 28 miles around the island to raise money for a local charity.

The event started in 1988, and over the years has raised more than £50,000.

In September, the cadets and invited guest teams raised money for the Jersey Brain Tumour Charity, which was chosen following the loss of a member of staff, CPO (SCC) David Moody, who succumbed to a tumour in 2013 having given over 56 years service as a cadet and staff member.

The cadets have now presented a cheque for £3,887 as a result of their efforts and those of guest teams from the charity, the Army Cadets, Air Training Corps, 10th St Brelade Scout Group and a local motorcycle club.

This is the largest single amount received by the charity since its formation.

Dinghy firm boosts Mansfield's fleet

MANSFIELD unit has taken delivery of two new dinghies, thanks to the generosity of a local company.

The Officer in Charge, CPO P Bailey said: "The cadets had fundraised hard to purchase new boats.

"They have used opportunities such as the Sail the UK initiative, discos and the unit booster stall to raise funds, but were considerably short of being able to purchase two dinghies."

After discussions between unit staff and Derby-based Hartley Boats a significant discount was offered, and two boats ordered.

The two owners of Hartley Boats, Richard and Mark Hartley, visited TS Prince Charles to present the two new Hartley Wanderer sailing dinghies.

Cadets took a break from their poppy-selling duties to proudly stand alongside their new craft and meet the Hartleys (pictured above right).

Richard Hartley said: "It is

wonderful to see youngsters on the water, and being able to help out has been a pleasure."

Mansfield Sea Cadets, who sail at Kings Mill Reservoir in Nottinghamshire, achieve success on a regular basis at both the Eastern Area and National sailing regattas, but their double-handed fleet of Bosuns has seen much better days.

Senior Sailing Instructor at the unit, CI Andy Hart, said that choosing the Wanderers had been an easy decision.

"Hartley Boats were extremely accommodating when we were reviewing options," he said.

"A trial boat was quickly arranged, and the pedigree of boat and the manufacturer soon became obvious.

"There was absolutely no sales push, and the Hartley team were very helpful.

"The most generous discount came after our decision, and is truly the icing on the cake."

Unit chairman Gary Weaver



said: "It is a real pleasure that two local businessmen could take the time to come to our unit and meet the cadets."

The boats were due to take to the water at the end of last

year for a staff and senior cadet familiarisation and development day, and will no doubt be seen regularly at regattas, including ones hosted by Eastern Area and local sailing clubs.

Fledgling Axbridge wins accolade

AXBRIDGE and Cheddar Valley unit was rewarded for its hard work and development with a special presentation at The Lawns Club in Taunton.

Around 300 cadets and volunteer staff from across Somerset and Dorset were in Taunton celebrating Trafalgar Day with a parade through the town, which incorporated a service at Mary Magdalene Church and a formal salute to assembled dignitaries.

A number of trophies and certificates were presented by Lord Lieutenant Lady Gass and Cdre Tim Hare, South West Chairman of the Marine Society and Sea Cadets.

The fledgling Axbridge unit was presented with the Ian Macdonald Trophy and a certificate for being the most improved unit in Somerset and Dorset.

Axbridge is the youngest and smallest in the two counties, having only been formed in April 2013. It currently has 16 cadets aged between 12 and 15 and five volunteer staff.

PO (SCC) Claire Peck and her husband PO (SCC) Adrian Peck, both of whom hold full time jobs, as well as supporting and instructing cadets, were there with seven members of the unit to accept the award.

PO Peck said: "I was totally shocked. There are some very big and well-established units across the district. To be formally recognised for the efforts that the staff, committee, parents and cadets themselves have put in, is fantastic.

"We are hoping that the next 12 months will be just as good and that we can keep going from strength to strength."

The unit meets on Tuesday and Thursday evenings at the Old Railway Station on Station Road in Axbridge. New cadets and staff members are always welcome, and should contact the unit on 01934 733601 or at axbridgecadets@btconnect.com

HMS Bristol welcomes Sea Scouts

HARBOUR training ship HMS Bristol hosted some 150 Sea Scouts from RN-recognised groups across the country for their annual autumn camp.

The Sea Scouts participated in a range of water-based activities (pictured right); many had the opportunity to practise coastal navigation and seamanship across the Solent and others gained qualifications as dinghy instructors, sailors and kayakers.

HMS Bristol provides training facilities for a range of Service personnel.

The Type 82 destroyer – the only one of her class of four that was built – also hosts more than 8,000 cadets and scouts every year, allowing them to gain a taste of life on board an RN warship whilst taking part in maritime-based training and acquaint visits in and around Portsmouth.



Picture: LS(WS) Chris Oldland



● JC Josh Williamson with Lt (SCC) Kay Adey RNR

Josh saved father's life

A JUNIOR cadet who put newly-learned lifesaving skills to critical use when his father fell ill has won the praise of his unit as well as his family.

Lt (SCC) Kay Adey RNR, of Leicester North unit, said: "I was contacted by the mother of JC Josh Williamson, aged 11.

"He had been staying with his father over the weekend when his father suddenly collapsed.

"Josh called the emergency services and then did all the things he had learned in his Heartstart lessons, including CPR.

"When the emergency services arrived Josh's dad was showing signs of life.

"It was later confirmed in hospital that he had suffered a heart attack.

"The ambulance crew stated that Josh was very calm and in control all the time.

"Josh gained his Heartstart in August on a junior camp held at Hinckley. As you can imagine his mum, the unit and I are very, very proud of him."

Parading with Lord Mayor

MORE than 100 Sea Cadets from across London took part in the Lord Mayor's Parade in the City of London to celebrate the arrival of the 687th Lord Mayor.

Thousands of people lined the streets to watch the procession, including the Sea Cadets' float, the theme of which was nautical adventure and fun.

All was made possible with the generous support of the Worshipful Company of Management Consultants and Quatro Plant Ltd.

Crowds were also treated to the Sea Cadets' signature tune, *Ready Aye Ready*, played by bands from Tunbridge Wells, Herne Bay and Poole.



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Bittersweet symphony as Royalist bows out



THE SPANISH dance song *Macarena* was an appropriate choice as Sea Cadets bid farewell to their flagship TS Royalist.

Dozens of cadets danced away on the decks following the ship's decommissioning ceremony at Fort Blockhouse, Gosport.

The ship's successor, also to be called TS Royalist, was approaching completion at a Spanish shipyard as *Navy News* went to press.

The dancing followed a more solemn service at Petrol Pier attended by more than 100 cadets and their supporters.

Captain Sea Cadets Capt Jonathan Holloway said: "Farewell to TS Royalist, a ship that has served the Sea Cadet Corps for many years and provided wonderful life-changing experiences to tens of thousands of cadets.

"It is, of course, a sad occasion, but we can also look forward with optimism to a new era with the new ship that will be in service next year."

MSSC President Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope said: "It is a bittersweet day. The decommissioning of any vessel is a sad event.

"Although the ship is now out of service the Royalist spirit will not die. It will live on both in name and the quality of training that will be delivered.

"The new flagship will enter service and will hopefully deliver another 40 years of service for the Sea Cadet Corps.

"The crew of the Royalist will transfer to the new vessel and work her up next spring.

"Their job will be to make the new Royalist as happy and successful as this one has been.

"It is the crew which makes a ship. They are made of steel, of wood, sail and engines but actually the people on board, the crew are what makes a ship."

Earlier, the sun broke through the grey skies as TS Royalist, dressed with flags, sailed into Portsmouth Harbour for the final time, led by tugs Independent and Bountiful spouting their water cannon.

Mexican waves abounded as the crew of the Royalist celebrated with the accompanying powerboats TS John Jerwood and TS Jack Petchey and yachts TS Vigilant and TS City Liveryman.

During her 43-year career TS Royalist, has taken more than 30,000 cadets to sea, operating each year from March to November. She has travelled 240,000 miles – equivalent to the distance between the Earth and the Moon.

Her CO, Lt Angie Morris RNR, said: "The day is one of mixed emotions. We are very sad to see the old ship go but excited for the new ship next spring."

LC Rosie Clark, 17, from Barnsley, who did a reading at the decommissioning service, has enjoyed six adventures aboard TS Royalist.

"It's really emotional," she said. "I'm so glad I am here. The spirit is what makes the ship and hopefully we can take that spirit to the new Royalist.

"It is amazing to be on board. The staff really make it a great time. The Sea Cadets

are my family."

Harry Salmon, 14, from Gosport, was on board TS Royalist for the first time as she entered Portsmouth Harbour. He was given the honour of removing the Ensign from the ship.

He said: "I feel privileged to be on this last voyage and to be representing the Sea Cadets."

LC Gareth from Northern Ireland District was in for a surprise when he was presented with the Martin Henwood Trophy after demonstrating the best Sea Cadets qualities in the year while on board TS Royalist.

Later this year the Sea Cadets will welcome the arrival in Portsmouth of the new TS Royalist, currently in the yard of Astilleros Gondan in northern Spain as a result of a three-year initiative to raise £4.8m.

The 104ft square-rigger will take up to 900 cadets a year on offshore voyages.

With the fundraising appeal for the new ship now closed, having reached its total, the charity is now focussing on a Flagship Bursary Appeal aimed at helping more young people get on board.

The Sea Cadet Corps aims to raise £500,000 for this over the next five years, and has already received support from the Michael Uren Foundation, a supporter of good causes including medical research, education, the Armed Forces and wildlife conservation.

See February's *Navy News* for a report on the launch of the new TS Royalist.

● TS Royalist makes her way to Fort Blockhouse flying her decommissioning pennant

Picture: LA(Phot) Rhys O'Leary



● An arch of water frames TS Royalist as she enters harbour

Picture: Nigel Huxtable

Cadets pay tribute

TWO Clapton and Hackney Sea Cadets were invited to Trafalgar Square for the 'Every Man Remembered' Statue.

The event was organised to remember more than one million Commonwealth Servicemen and women who died during World War 1.

Organised by the Greater London Royal British Legion, the event saw TS Bulwark sign the paperwork to become affiliated with the Greater London RBL.

AC Hazon and AC Andrews met the stars from the BBC's *Strictly Come Dancing*, all helping to raise money for the 2014 Poppy Appeal.

AB Hazon said: "It has been great to be invited along to take part in a fantastic day to remember all those who fought for our country."

www.everymanremembered.org

Busy schedule for Remembrance period

ONCE again, Cardiff Sea Cadets were prominent in the Remembrance services and fundraising events in support of the Royal British Legion held in South Wales.

The cadets helped raise more than £2,800 from the sale of programmes and poppies at the Legion's Festival of Remembrance (Wales).

They also took part in the annual Merchant Navy remembrance service in Cardiff Bay, where a wreath was laid by CO CWEM(O) (SCC) Michael Dixon.

As part of the service, a Bible reading in Welsh was given by AC Gwennllian Arkless.

On Remembrance Sunday, TS Cardiff's standard bearers and wreath-laying party marched to the Falklands Memorial in Alexandra Gardens (pictured right), where two wreaths were laid, one on behalf of the Corps,

the second on behalf of the HMS Glamorgan Falklands Association.

With one of the largest contingents on parade, TS Cardiff then marched past the City Hall dais, where the salute was taken by the Lord Lieutenant of South Glamorgan, Surg Cdr Peter Beck.

Another unit with a busy remembrance programme was Burton-on-Trent, which took part in a concert and two parades in just five days.

One of the unit's cadets, LC Pickering, was at the National Memorial Arboretum service where he did a reading in front of thousands of people.

Cadets of Weston-super-Mare unit took part in the Remembrance ceremonies in London.

The cadets were part of a group from South West Area to represent the Corps at the national events.



They also were given a tour of London, seeing Westminster Abbey, 10 Downing Street and the Lord Mayor's Show.

Three Cadet Petty Officers were at the Royal Albert Hall for

the Festival of Remembrance, helping out with programmes.

On Sunday they were part of the Remembrance Day parade, marching past the Cenotaph and the Royal Family.

Burgee presented

GUILDFORD cadets have been celebrating the successes of their unit and of individual members.

Guest of honour Lt Col David Gosling RM presented awards to cadets and a burgee, awarded to the top 25 per cent of units, to PO (SCC) Pat Francis, unit CO.

Three Junior Cadets – Amelie Swaisland, and Ben and Honor Grear – received Commodore's Pennants signifying successful completion of their training.

Other awards went to Cadets Oscar McIntosh (first aid), Sam Clayton (paddlesports), Liberty Dearsley and Hattie Owen (camp craft).

Cdt L/Cpl Joe Perryer received a Kayak award and the Whitear Trophy for best RM Cadet, while Cdt Eleanor Whittaker and RM Cds Lydia Morgan and Megan Blackmore were congratulated on their promotions.

Knee deep in rum

FOR many of us the rum issue is something we shall always remember. For me there was an occasion when it was more than literally true.

The scene: On board the Algerine-class minesweeper HMS Acute in the heat of the Mediterranean in 1945.

I was officer of the day and supervising the delivery of a consignment of rum in barrels.

Suddenly one of the barrels slipped out of its sling and plunged into the spirit room where it burst open and flooded the deck.

Fortunately it missed the men doing the unloading but they were soon reeling from the effects of the fumes.

I immediately informed the First Lt who came to check the situation and said we must report

this to the Captain as such a large quantity of rum would have to be officially written off.

In our rum-reeking clothes we went to the CO's cabin. As we stood in the doorway, his first words were: "You idiots – who's been giving you all that rum?"

He was duly made aware of what had actually happened, and so the next step was to mop up the rum. This was done in turns by men who could only stay a short while in the spirit room.

Buckets of the precious, but now contaminated, liquid were taken onto the open deck and poured over the side. Many a tear was shed as members of the crew watched Nelson's Blood disappearing into the sea.

Mike Alston
Ex-Sub/Lt RNRV
Maidenhead

We're in the picture



YOUR Mystery Ship picture of HMS Kingfisher during a transit of the Caledonian Canal in 1989 shows me standing on the bridge roof, the shorter of the two figures.

I have other pictures of Kingfisher but not this one and we were just emerging from a series of locks, where we were able to enjoy an ice-cream as we progressed up the ladder.

Len Wheatley
Chaplain of the Fleet
Newton Abbot

I AM the officer looking astern on the port bridge wing of HMS Kingfisher in your October edition.

Cdr Richard Farrington is in the middle driving. I would hope he recognised himself as well.

Lt Cdr Andy Horner
HMS Bulwark

Caring question

WE have but one Naval nursing home to cover all the needs of the ever-increasing population of ex-matelots who obviously are becoming more and more fragile by the day.

The big question is: Do we need another such home? If so where and what scope should it cover?

I pose this question because today we are afflicted with many neurological problems that need specialist care and ex-matelots are not exempt. As part of the Service family they/we should have access to it.

How do we afford such a place? We have always been a determined breed and stood on our own two feet starting with:

1. Of course the forerunner of all our endeavours has to be the RNBT.

2. The China Fleet Club (matelots went round the Fleet cap in hand to raise funds for such a venture and they did too), the proof being in Cornwall today and thriving.

3. A shining example of what can be done from humble beginnings is the marvelous Union Jack Club.

There are numerous trusts and charities out there who would willingly donate to such a cause.

The Royal British Legion have extended their nursing home in Somerset in order to be able to cater for such cases. If they can do it, why can't we?

Cost should not be part of the equation, we owe it to those who need it most.

Mick Withington
S/M, Isle of Sheppey
Branch of RNA

What a welcome from my Gipsy

IN EARLY 1949 I was drafted abroad for over two years and my dog Gipsy seemed to settle down very quickly, even giving up any half-hearted attention to my bedroom.

Towards the end of the Korean War, and just over two years later, I disembarked from a troop ship at Southampton and made my way home on extended leave.

My parents knew roughly when I was arriving but nobody realised that I would be home a full week early.

On reaching my home station, I called a taxi to transport myself and my numerous belongings to the railway crossing which was my home.

The taxi driver drove up to my home and, as he had done countless times before, sat and sounded the car horn to indicate that the gates needed opening to allow his passage.

My dad's appearance to open the gates would then be the first he'd know of my arrival.

At home a little earlier Gipsy started to become fidgety. It was just after lunch time and my dad was drying the dishes whilst my mum did the washing up and both noticed the dog's behaviour



Each month Pusser's Rum are offering to courier a bottle of their finest tipple to the writer of our top letter. This month's winner is Brian Cox

but thought that she was getting impatient for her meal.

The car drew up to the gates and the driver gave just one normal blast on the horn.

Dad said later that he uttered his usual brief word of annoyance, put the drying cloth down and reached for the door handle to go outside, telephone the station, and then open the gates.

Everything was normal. That is except for Gipsy. She flew at the door and thrashed at it, only to succeed in forcing it closed again.

"What the hell's the matter with that dog?" shouted dad as he finally got the door open.

Gipsy belted through, hurtled up the garden path to where the gate was shut, by-passed it and charged our low wall about a metre or so high, and just leapt at it.

Never had she done so before, nor since, but on this occasion she literally launched herself over it.

The welcome had to be experienced to be believed. Finally the chaos eased and I was then able to see dad, mum, and the taxi driver, all standing in the road looking totally astonished. How did my dog know?

There were many more partings and many more welcomes but nothing to ever match that homecoming.

Today I watch the Naval homecomings of sailors who have been away and I see copious relatives, wives, babies, kisses galore that they obviously cherish, but I can still only reflect that my most treasured welcome was that from a beloved animal.

Brian Cox
HMS Cockade 1949-1950
Bridport

In the mood for dancing



I WAS reading an article by Captain Guy O'Donnell at Christmas Island in 1956/7.

I think the picture above left is him in an 'off-duty mood' and it must have been catching as the ship's commander was also having a go, pictured above right.

I have also included a photograph of the same ship HMS Warrior, of the crew being entertained during a visit to Rarotonga, one of the Cook Islands.

D Kelly
Ex L/Std, HMS Warrior
New South Wales, Australia

History of battalions

IN THE October edition of *Navy News*, in the article reference HMS Argyll's visit to Baltimore, you quote the Scots Guards as the oldest infantry battalion in the British Army.

The oldest is 2nd Battalion, the Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment.

The Scots Guards can trace their history back to 1642 and as such can claim to be the oldest infantry battalion in the Brigade of Guards, although they are only ranked third in the order of precedence of the Foot Guards Division. They also had a break in service from 1651 until 1661.

2nd Battalion PWRR are the direct descendants of Captain Morgan's Company, the London Trained Bands. Formed in 1572 they have served for 442 years without a break and have been known as The Buffs (Royal East Kent Regiment).

I was an AB RP2 1951-59, then joined 5th Battalion The Buffs TA in 1960, served on active service in Aden in 1965, attached to 1st Battalion The Royal Sussex Regiment and loaned to 45 Commando in the Radfan Mountains. My rank was platoon sergeant. My last ship was HMS Victorious.

MF Milham Capt Rtd
Broadstairs, Kent

In Royal Guard at Holyrood

IN SEPTEMBER'S *Navy News* you featured an article about the Royal Guard at Holyrood House in 1950.

I was a member of the guard while serving on HMS Wrangler. I received a picture of the guard marching down the Royal Mile. I was told it was in 1951 and that the guard was made up of both HMS Ocean and the Reserves on the Clyde in HMS Jupiter.

I remember that they wanted a guard which had completed rifle drill most recently. Virtually all members were ex-boy sailors from the training establishments Vincent and Ganges.

Cdr Ian Macdonald was correct in placing it in 1950. I do hope I am correct in my assumption that there was not a further Naval guard during 1951.

I am a retired Naval health inspector and port health officer. I am researching medical officers' reports from ships of the fleet from 1914 up until 1939, in the Royal Naval Historical Library in Portsmouth Naval Base and the Institute of Naval Medicine in Alverstoke.

I have been doing this enjoyable task since 1995.

Mike Northeast
Hayling Island

RN graves kept in good order

I WAS on a driving holiday in South Carolina, USA and we took the ferry/highway that wanders along the Outer Banks area.

It was a lovely drive along the Cape Hatteras seashore.

In a place called Ocracoke Village I came across a British Cemetery, the graves were for Royal Navy sailors lost during WW2.

The site is well kept and looked after by the local coastguard.

The main stone, pictured, lists all the names of those lost, but two stone markers state "unknown sailor Royal Navy".

I thought how very sad.

N McKinstry (RN 1949-1957)
Toronto, Canada



NAVY NEWS

Mail Point 1-4, Navy Command, Leach Building, HMS Excellent, Portsmouth PO2 8BY

Jan 2015 No. 726: 61st year

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We look particularly for correspondence which stimulates debate, makes us laugh or raises important issues. The editor reserves the right to edit your submissions.

On top of the world, RNR...

IF YOU'RE going to study the effects of altitude sickness, this is about as good a place on the planet as you'll find.

With the summit of the world's highest mountain as a backdrop, **Flying Fox** reservist Surg Lt Cdr Peter Wrigglesworth poses for an Everest 'me shot' in the middle of a three-week expedition to the High Himalayas.

The medical officer – a GP in Weston-super-Mare in his day job – headed to the roof of the world for a 21-day course focused on treating acute mountain sickness.

Peter was working at an average base height of more than 5,000 metres (16,500 feet) and a maximum of 5,500m (18,000 feet), concentrating on the conditions mountaineers working at height often suffer, such as HACE (High Altitude Cerebral Edema) and HAPE (High Altitude Pulmonary Edema).

"These are much more serious than the

more common acute mountain sickness and are potentially lethal, unless they are treated promptly," he explained.

"I love getting out and about and this has been a great experience. We certainly felt the effect of altitude on our physical performance and several of us actually experienced acute mountain sickness."

While at the Base Camp, Peter also had the chance to be involved with more serious cases being treated at the Everest Mountain Hospital at Periche.

"It was a great course on mountain and wilderness medicine in real conditions with the bonus of having Everest as the backdrop.

"It was the sort of experience where a civilian-acquired skill is directly applicable in the military setting and where previous military-acquired skills were directly used in my completing the course."



SPORT



BRNC's 14-year drought ends

BRNC held off the Wafus of HMS Seahawk to take the **RNRU Navy Cup 12-7** – Dartmouth's first triumph in the competition in 14 years.

With the match played under the floodlights at Devonport Combined Services Rugby Club, in Plymouth, both teams made a scrappy start with a number of handling errors.

The Culdrose pack dominated the scrum, but in open play and at the breakdown, the determination and speed of BRNC allowed them to clear their lines and apply pressure which led to a number of penalties being awarded against Seahawk.

The Cornishmen took the lead with a converted try on 17 minutes – but were brought back to level pegging thanks to an accurate cross-field kick by

Mid Dane Smallbone which put Mid Daz Pounder in for a BRNC try, converted by Smallbone.

A dozen minutes later and Mid Joe Adams broke the Seahawk defensive line to score BRNC's second try (unconverted).

It remained 12-7 at the break – and throughout the second half. For despite continuous pressure from BRNC for the first 25 minutes, resulting in a succession of penalties from Seahawk, the College couldn't add to its tally.

Seahawk started to show more attacking flair, creating a number of line breaks in the final 15 minutes – but the final pass never delivered a score.

Picture: Alligin Photography

More sport on pages 39-40



Dedication's what you need – and have

THE head of the Maritime Reserves headed west to **Flying Fox** to thank some of the unit's stalwarts for their commitment to the RNR cause.

Cdre Andrew Jameson presented Volunteer Reserve Service Medals for ten years' continuous and efficient service to four Foxes: XO Lt Cdr Sue Roll, Lt Cdr Henry Watts, Lt Tony Gilbert and PO John 'Fred' Parry.

The latter is a 'career reservist', currently working full-time as the unit's instructor at HMS Flying Fox.

"It's been a great ten years with two Middle East deployments on anti-piracy duties along with numerous foreign port visits – the best being the Falkland Islands and Hong Kong. I hope the next ten years are as interesting and as much fun," said PO Parry.

Lt Gilbert, an industrial chemist in a power station by day, has recently returned from a six-month deployment to the RN's HQ in Bahrain, while Lt Cdr Watts is currently on sabbatical from his job as an MOD civil servant to work on Flying Fox's support staff.

As for the unit's Executive Officer, Lt Cdr Roll's award reflects more than 25 years' dedication to the RNR; she's already been awarded the Reserve Decoration for 15 years' service.

"I just blinked and those 25 years have disappeared," she said. "It's been a brilliant time so far – and I'm not done yet."

"Among the highlights of my career are being deployed as the first female in charge of the RN unit in Dubai in 2012; serving in the USS McInerney off Florida in 2003; a crossing the line certificate for going over the equator and a 'blue nose' one for sailing into the Arctic Circle."

Flying Fox's CO Cdr Dave 'Dibs' Bucknell said the presentations were "the tip of the Fox iceberg."

Silver award for council's RNR support

SUPPORT for the men and women of HMS King Alfred earned Hampshire County Council a silver award as it was recognised by the government.

After singling out the best national employers who have bent over backwards to help military reservists on their books – PM David Cameron hosted a reception for 'gold' award winners in the summer – Whitehall's Employer Recognition Scheme focused on the regional level.

Under the scheme, part of the wider – and long-running – SaBRE (Support for Britain's Reservists and Employers) initiative, silver awards are presented to firms and organisations who demonstrate their support for the Army, Maritime or RAF Reserve.

In the case of the Winchester-based county authority, the council has worked closely with King Alfred to increase awareness of the Reserve Forces and has been actively promoting the RNR recruiting campaign across Hampshire.

Representatives from the Whale Island-based unit and the council were invited to Blenheim Palace in Oxfordshire to receive the award from Reserves Minister Julian Brazier.

"County council staff have generously helped us to increase our profile across the region," said King Alfred's CO Cdr Anthony Stickland.

"Our partnership with the council has already yielded positive rewards as we continue to reach out to the wider civilian community to increase understanding of the role of the Royal Naval Reserve."

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● HMS Talent and HMS Triumph will relocate to HM Naval Base Clyde in 2019 and 2020 respectively

Picture: LA(Phot) Pepe Hogan

We are listening to your concerns



Cdre Mike Walliker, DRASM, talks about the Future Submariner programme following the announcement in November 2014 regarding the Trafalgar-class submarines.

FUTURE Submariner is the umbrella under which the Sustainable Submarine Manning Programme (SSMP), the Submarine Training Capability Programme, and the Submarine Centre of Specialisation Programme reside.

These programmes will significantly shape the future Submarine Service and by bringing them together we are ensuring a unified approach to manpower, infrastructure and training initiatives. Together they will make the Submarine Service sustainable in the long term.

I am delighted to be able to take this opportunity to update you and your families on a major decision that was recently announced regarding the base porting of the Trafalgar-class submarines.

As you will have been informed by your Chain of Command, it has been decided that HMS Torbay and HMS Trenchant will not change base ports and that HMS Talent and HMS Triumph will relocate to HM Naval Base Clyde in 2019 and 2020 respectively.

This decision has primarily come about as a direct response to the feedback that SSMP received from submariners and is a great example of how your concerns have been listened to by the headquarters.

This decision in no way changes the intent for us to have a Single Integrated Submarine Operating Base on the Clyde, co-located with state-of-the-art training and support facilities in a great environment for families.

By 2019, the vast majority of submarine training will take place where

our boats are based.

Rear Admiral Submarines (RASM) and I are very aware that we have been living off the goodwill of submariners and their families for some time.

The community has spoken and we now have a tremendous opportunity to make the changes that are required.

We know that tinkering around the edges isn't enough, which is why there is a huge effort going on behind the scenes to get Future Submariner right.

We are looking at how we crew our boats, have set in motion the process to reward you better, and are investing a significant amount to get the best training facilities, accommodation and support in Faslane.

Some of this will take time to implement correctly but some benefits are already on their way. We will all need to pull together to make the changes happen but I have no doubt that it will be worth the effort.

Finally, RASM has asked that I pass on his thanks and appreciation to the 500 serving, veteran and future submariners and their families who attended the Submarine Memorial weekend in London on November 2. This event continues to grow and it was an honour to be among you on the day. Thank you.

Future Submariner: over 50 projects – a £750m investment. But what is changing for you today?

This update follows the announcement on T-class basing in the UK. Submariners and family members told us about their reservations regarding rebasing and the consequences for harmony for those living in the South West.

The Royal Navy and the Secretary of State listened, and HMS Torbay and HMS Trenchant will now see out their lifecycles in Devonport.

This shows that your leadership is well tuned-in to the needs of its personnel.

You said:

■ That moving all T-boat crews to Faslane would cause upheaval for well-

FUTURE SUBMARINER

established Devonport families, and greatly decrease their harmony.

■ That a number of shore positions also need to be retained in Devonport to provide better sea/shore balance.

We acted:

■ Your opinions were taken up through the RN chain of command.

■ We gained Secretary of State's approval for an approach to redeployment that supports harmony and continues to meet Defence needs.

■ Ensured that T-boat training remained in Devonport, further protecting shore jobs for those who live there.

What else? We are driving several reforms (described here), with much more to follow between now and 2030.

Personnel

SWS/TWS and Warfare Review. Studies have identified where short-term improvements can be made in these cadres. The recommendations, such as fast-tracking suitable LETs, are now being managed by the waterfront flotillas.

Pay and package. SSMP has submitted recommendations to update your remuneration package to better recognise your commitment, particularly at sea. The next Armed Forces Pay Review Board will report in early 2015.

Duty Watch Changes. You expressed concern about the inflexible regulations for duty watches and their effect on harmony. SSMP presented a case for change and a review is now under way.

Training

Submarine Training Facility (SMTF). Approval for the facility is expected by Apr 2015 for this well-developed design. SMTF will be a world-class installation and we look forward to sharing details in due course.

Infrastructure

SFA: £18m has already been invested to refresh Faslane SFA and this investment is set to continue.

As a result, submariners can expect first-rate family accommodation in the Clyde area, which is also well-placed for employment, schooling and family activities in the area.

SLA is undergoing sustained improvement. Between now and the end of the decade, your accommodation will continue to upgrade.

We know that this development will inevitably involve disturbance and your patience is appreciated.

Clyde Naval Base facilities: Including new dining and gym facilities at the north end of HMNB Clyde, as well as WiFi installed in all communal areas in the messes.

Updates from around the Submarine Service

Astute-class Capability: Astute and Ambush have both recently returned from their maiden operational deployments.

Reports on their performance are extremely positive and show they are among the most capable platforms in the world.

In particular the optronics that replace traditional periscopes redefines how visual information can be obtained and used.

No longer is the view through the periscope restricted to the person manning it, as it can be displayed on-screen for detailed analysis and simultaneous review by all those that need to see it.

The boats have an extremely low noise signature and the sonar 2076 system is

world beating.

With a significantly greater weapon capacity and a number of other 'sneaky' capabilities the future SSN force in the Royal Navy is becoming ever more capable.

Professional Life in Faslane

A huge effort has been made to improve support to submariners. This has a positive impact as crews spend less time chasing stores, getting technical assistance when required or waiting for cranes to be available to move equipment on and off the boat.

This has been reported to be a real source of 'harbour hassle' and the commissioning of the Valiant Jetty is a significant improvement to the legacy berths at the southern end of the base.

Dedicated facilities for the Astute class in addition to those for the Vanguard class are already reducing the time it takes for maintenance, meaning submarine programmes are less likely to change at the last minute and crews and families can plan their lives better.

Devonport

Until Talent and Triumph relocate, HMNB Devonport will remain the home of submariners in the south, providing operational support and platform-specific training to the Trafalgar class.

The base will also continue to provide deep maintenance for submarines beyond 2020.

It is hoped that a good number of submariner families enjoy the continuity and stability that comes with Torbay and Trenchant staying South West for the remainder of these boats' service lives.

Feedback

Contribute your comments to the following address:

navyppers-ssmpcommunications@mod.uk

NAVAL FAMILIES FEDERATION

Housing tops list of issues raised

AS WE pack away the Christmas decorations and welcome in the New Year, we thought it could be useful to provide *Navy News* readers with an insight into the issues that Royal Naval and Royal Marines families have raised with us over the past 12 months. We have also given a couple of examples of queries that have been brought to us.

There has been a 40 per cent increase in the number of enquiries into the NFF office. Accommodation remains the biggest cause for concern (32 per cent), followed by signposting (22 per cent) and family (14 per cent). Within these categories, concerns break down as follows:

Accommodation

■ Entitlement to Service Family Accommodation (SFA) (95%)

■ Allocation of SFA (61%)

■ Move In/Move Out of SFA (39%)

Signposting

■ Other (83%) ie the Royal Navy Diversity and Inclusion team, and the British Forces Post Office

■ Charities (71%)

■ Royal Navy & Royal Marines Welfare (43%)



Family

■ Welfare support to families (71%)

■ Family concerns (57%)

■ Relationship/marital problems (41%)

Here are two examples of the types of enquiries we assist with:

Q A serving person contacted us for assistance with a housing issue on November 17.

He was assigned to Plymouth and applied for Service Family Accommodation in August. He submitted the e-1132 form with all the documentation and occupational therapy reports required for disability

adaptations to be made to the property.

The family moved into the property in October but no adaptations had been completed.

His wife's disabilities meant that without the adaptations she was unable to use the taps or get upstairs unaided, and her mobility was restricted throughout the house.

All that was required was some different taps, grab rails, and outside hand bannisters.

A The NFF liaised with the Defence Infrastructure Organisation and

MODern Housing Solutions (now replaced by CarillionAmey) to highlight the health and safety issues for the spouse, and the implications this had on the serving person's ability to complete his daily role.

Following this contact, the works were booked in very quickly and on November 25 the adaptations were complete.

Q We had a query from a serving person assigned overseas. His family accompanied him abroad but his daughter has returned to the UK to study at university.

She has been told that she cannot open a student bank account as she has not been living in the UK for the last three years.

A This was seen by the NFF as a disadvantage brought about by Service life.

With consent from the serving person, the NFF Armed Forces Covenant Co-ordinators liaised with their contacts at HSBC for information and guidance. Her local HSBC then contacted the family direct and a bank account was opened for the daughter within 48 hours of the NFF putting the two parties in contact. Result!

We look forward to continuing our engagement with Royal Naval and Royal Marines personnel and their extended families in 2015.

We can provide information, clarify rules, take on complex enquiries, demystify the system, and mediate between families and other parties.

We use this contact with families to spot trends of concern and feed this back to the Royal Navy and MOD, in order to challenge and influence policies.

Exciting postings on offer

WELCOME to the second part of Drafty's Corner sponsored by the CNPERS Warfare Division. Based in West Battery, Whale Island, CM OF WAR provides career management for all warfare officers.

Specialist Navigating Officers

The Spec N cadre continues to offer a stimulating opportunity for successful FNOs, PWOs, submariners and RFA officers.

HMS Queen Elizabeth will see its first Cdr N and Lt Cdr specialist navigator joining later this year.

Notwithstanding the exciting opportunities presented by these new aircraft carriers, our current capital ships continue to offer unique professional challenges in a variety of operating environments, and the NO QELZ will have already navigated one of these ships.

Furthermore, having bridge conduct of one of the Navy's largest warships is an ideal opportunity to build and demonstrate command credentials for the future.

On top of these key challenging positions at sea, the plot continues to offer attractive opportunities for foreign exchange jobs, teaching navigation in both the US and Australian Naval schools.

If you are interested in becoming a Specialist Navigating Officer, you should contact Lt Cdr Giles Palin (OCMXU) **NAVY PERS-CM OF WAR USO2**; Ext 8978

Going deep – Submarine Specialisation

Healthy recruiting has now led to an upsurge in junior officers at sea where the next generation of submarine commanding officers are starting to learn their trade.

Within the next few years they will filter through to more senior positions as navigators and watchleaders.

However, we can't become complacent and need to work hard to maintain recruiting levels.

Promotion throughout the branch is increasing as we prepare for the numbers required for the manning of the next generation of SSBNs and the continued roll out of the Astute Class.

With SM(N) and PWO(SMs) fulfilling OpTours, NATO and LFS roles traditionally the preserve of General Service, the SM community is spread far and wide in interesting assignments, as well as the core warfighting assignments in SSNs and SSBNs.

Whilst not actively recruiting from within the RN Officer Corps, the SM Service welcomes new talent and, if you are interested, you should contact Lt Cdr Neil Lamont RN (OCMXSM). **NAVY PERS-CM OF WAR SMSO2**; Ext 8845

Scrutinising the bottom – The HM Specialisation

HM Officers are specialists in the exploitation of the environment (both above and below the water), providing geospatial intelligence to the warfighter and acting as a key enabler to operations. In order to deliver this effect the branch needs quality officers with drive, enthusiasm and commitment.

HM Officers are embedded in all Battle Staffs, Fleet Headquarters, amphibious platforms and air stations as well as providing support to deployed FF/DD. Additionally, the hydrographic flotilla is world-renowned for gathering bathymetric and oceanographic data to support the UKHO production of charts and environmental briefing documentation for military and civilian use.

There is a misconception that becoming an HM precludes

Drafty's corner



you from fulfilling many roles in the RN or caps your career progression.

We need those that wish to navigate (two FNOs per ship) as well as those that want to forecast in front-line squadrons and battle staffs. There are opportunities to become a PWO and definitely opportunities to command for those that rigorously pursue the CQ route. In addition, there are a number of challenging shore and sea assignments in the front line and in the field of analysis.

The demand for HM services in the MCM and INT community remains high and the call on HM skill sets in general warfare (surface and subsurface) continue to grow. For further career information contact Lt Cdr Andy Jacob RN (OCM HM). **NAVY PERS-CM OF WAR HMSO2**; Ext 8973

Flying into the future – the Fleet Air Arm

The FAA is undergoing a period of significant change with transition to new aircraft types progressing at pace. Merlin Mk2 is now delivering in the operational arena, Maritime Wildcat will deploy for the first time in the next few months, DDH responsibility for Merlin Mk 3 has transferred from the RAF to RN with 846 NAS standing up in September 2014 as the first RN Merlin Mk3 squadron, the FW Cadre continues to grow ready to man F35 when it enters service in 2017, and the ATC Cadre needs to grow to meet the manning requirement for QNLZ.

The older aircraft types continue to deliver significant operational effect on the front line and this provides opportunities for career development and higher levels of responsibility, for example the extension of SKASaC to 2018 and the formation of a single-squadron structure to take this forward.

The key role of the career manager remains to create, develop, employ and retain SQEP and, whilst this can be difficult in a period of such organisational change, it will help to assure the longer term future of the FAA.

Career Managers' advice is to ensure that page one of your OJAR is up to date; take responsibility for your own career development by ensuring that relevant qualifications and competences are gained in good time and maintained up-to-date (CQ(A)1 is a good example that is increasingly required, and entirely within your own gift to achieve); and never go out of date for your RNFT.

Navigating into clear water – General Service Warfare Plot

There has never been a better time to run your headmark and stay on track progressing up the chain through your PNO assignment (OOW1 or OPS/N2) to your FNO tour. This has several advantages for your career, particularly in regard to preparing for OF2 sea command either in a small vessel command or CQ1 assignment. The FNO qualification is now

more valuable than ever and the standard route (OOW2,3,4 – OOW1 – FNO) is still amongst the best ways to secure a long-term career and give you the best chance to promote ahead of your peers. Sometimes it can be worth taking the path more trodden. To discuss your planned General Service career path in more detail contact Lt Cdr Olly Slight RN (OCMXJO). **NAVY PERS-CM OF WAR JOSO2**; Ext 8866

Common Appointments (CAPPs)

Want something challenging, new and a little different? Your CM has a considerable number of CAPPs that need capable people to fill them. These will take you out of your core trained role, in some cases into the joint environment, and often to some very interesting Loan Foreign Service (LFS) assignments. Call your CM to discuss the range of opportunities that exist.

Optours

Optours continue to provide a good opportunity for warfare personnel to gain useful operational experience, an excellent addition to the CV, improving one's future employability.

The Naval Personnel Warfare Division continues to manage a large Optour plot spread across the various operational theatres around the world, as well as providing additional personnel for events, short-notice Ops and exercises.

When one excludes those personnel already in front-line units, in jobs which are in direct support to operations or in positions which are dual assigned to contingency and augmentation billets, the size of the manpower pool which can be called upon to supply personnel to fill Optours is relatively small.

The nature of the branch means there is a high likelihood that one will be asked to commit to a six-month Optour at some point in one's career. Please be mindful of this and manage your expectations so, as you near the end of your shore-based assignment, unless proceeding to sea on completion, you are prepared that you may be asked to contribute to this high demand on warfare personnel.

Important issues on the horizon

Small Vessel Command: This initiative is progressing well with two selection boards every year (spring and autumn) to identify Junior OF2s to take command of a P2000 for 12 months.

Crucially SVC only requires 18 months of Qualifying Sea Service (compared to the 36 required for CQ1). Those selected will undergo the PNO course if not already complete and a DESIG course overseen by 1PBS.

After successfully completing their SVC, individuals will qualify for auto transfer to Career Commission and will have an all-important command Assignment OJAR to add to their portfolio. The SVC process does not replace the need to get yourself CQ1 but should be seen as a stepping stone in the process – non-selection at SVC does not preclude CQ1 Command at a later date. Read DIN 2014 03-14 which explains the process.

Command Qualifications and the road to SASB selection: Command should be the aspiration of every warfare officer, regardless of sub-specialisation.

Timing of an SASB1 assignment, especially at OF3 level, is crucial in that it provides an individual with one of the best springboards to OF4 promotion and success at the subsequent SASB2 selection.

When to complete a SASB1 assignment needs to be discussed between the individual and CM,

to ensure it is aligned with the individual's promotion board scoring profile and seniority. Do it too late and you risk delaying your career progression; do it too early and you could find yourself doing a number of post SASB1 jobs before promotion, making your sea experience out of date at any subsequent SASB2 board.

Passing CQ1 remains the biggest hurdle to individuals achieving command and junior warfare officers are strongly encouraged to attempt the board as soon as they become suitably experienced in bridge watchkeeping duties.

The latest policy on Command Exams and the CQ process is contained within 2013DIN01-244, the Command Competence Framework is contained within DIN 2012DIN01-244.

JPA and Administration

JPA contact details: Please ensure your contact details are registered on JPA and are up to date. Make sure that JPA reflects your true and realistic preferences. The needs of the Service will take priority in all CM assignment decisions, but the CM will endeavour to match this against personal preferences wherever possible.

Future Availability Date (FAD): FADs are used by the CM as an administrative tool to plan your move on date and can be amended to suit unit programmes.

If you are aware that you are due to leave your ship shortly after a work-up period, or half way through a deployment, flag this fact up with your chain of command and ensure that your CM is aware.

Developed Vetting (DV): A number of posts require DV clearance. The process is conducted electronically initially and requires a civilian email address and access to the internet to fill in the e-form. Incorrect or incomplete forms will delay the DV process. DVs can take up to six months to complete.

Voluntary Outflow (VO): Please discuss your intentions with your CM before submitting a Voluntary Outflow (PVR) request on JPA. Your CM will attempt to accommodate your leaving aspirations, which may include a request to leave the Service within a reduced notice period. It should be noted that the norm is to complete the full 12 months statutory notice. For further information you should consult the regulations in BR3 Ch 54.

RNFT: If you wish to be considered for promotion then JPA must reflect, on the Common Reporting Date (CRD), that you are either; in date for RNFT, or that you are in possession of a valid extension or waiver. Once selected for promotion, you must be in date on the substantive promotion date if you are to be promoted. In short, you should either be in date for RNFT or possession of a valid extension or waiver at all times. Temporary extensions for overseas assignments should be sought from HMS Temeraire iaw RNTM 25/12.

Leave: Excessive leave balances hamper assignments and may prevent you being considered for a particular job. Ensure you take your leave entitlement and that it is correctly recorded in JPA.

Where to look

Galaxies
34-2014: Submarine Service: Future Basing Plans
33-2014: Royal Hospital School – life-changing opportunities for children of Naval families
32-2014: Changes to electoral registration

RNTMs

277/14: Unit JPA I-Expenses Management
281/14: Royal Naval Engineers' Quart Club Annual Dinner – Friday February 6 2015
282/14: Programme Faraday – Integration of the Submarine Service WESM and CISSM sub branches – policy for the cross training of source branch personnel
289/14: Part-Time Service Instructors' Qualification – Award in Education and Teaching
290/14: AB(CIS)2 Career Course JPA Competencies

DINS

2014DIN01-209: Guidance to Commanding Officers and victims when dealing with allegations of serious criminal offences including sexual offences
2014DIN01-217: TV Licensing – Commanding Officers' responsibilities and the requirements for Service personnel, visiting forces, MOD establishments, messes and clubs
2014DIN01-220: Introduction of Sexual Orientation Declaration and Monitoring using JPA for Armed Forces personnel
2014DIN01-223: Shared Parental Leave
2014DIN07-171: The Association of Royal Naval Officers Prize Essay Competition (ARNOPEC) Sep 2014-Aug 2015
2014DIN07-172: Joint Service Paragliding Centre (JSPGC) Paragliding Course Schedule 2015/16

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Programme Faraday

What Faraday did for you in our first year

JAN
30

THE year started with a move from Phoenix Building across to our current home in Walcheren Building on Whale Island.

FEB
28

This month's highlight was the £3 million contract awarded to Babcock Flagship Ltd for the redesign of ET, LET and POET career courses to be designed using the Individual Competence Framework.

The Interim Fast Track (IFT) scheme was established, utilising the spare capacity on the current POET qualifying course. The number of applications exceeded the number of places available, which was good as it showed that people wanted to accelerate their careers.

MAR
31

The main focus this month was on developing the content for the new CPO to WO Professional Examination (PE) syllabus.

As with many of the Faraday initiatives, it involved using individuals within the engineering community with the development of the syllabus, based around the mandatory and desirable competencies of the WOQC.

Units were asked to submit both topics and typical questions which they thought were appropriate for the PE. Work started on the first RNTM explaining how the Individual Competence Framework (ICF) will work and explain how we will all be involved in its use.

We reiterated the rules regarding accreditation; all training has to be reviewed to ensure appropriate accreditation is awarded.

This was backed up with one of the many references that we have uncovered; for those interested JSP 898 Chap 5 has all the details. To enhance training at HMS Sultan a T45 refrigeration system and a CAT Diesel engine have been installed and set to work.

APR
30

The 'month of the RNTM'. The first issued was the EGS CPO to WO PE syllabus and guidelines. The initial explanation of how the ICF will be used was published; not as interesting as the PE or Streaming RNTMs but an important one nevertheless!

For streaming we knew that without some guidance as to what equipment or system would be looked after by each stream we would be inundated with questions. So included in the RNTM was an equipment guide to help you decide which stream you wished to be considered for. This month saw a significant step forward for the WE/CIS integration coming under the umbrella of Faraday. During early 2014 the Support Improvement Programme (SIP) had been gaining momentum and in April Faraday and SIP amalgamated under one Programme. The final RNTM of the month was the details of the Branch Manager, SIP and Faraday Road Shows planned for May.

MAY
31

The first revised ETICC commenced, with the course being extended from 19 to 30 weeks and a 72 per cent increase in mechanical and electrical training.

The SIP Team battled hard this month to understand what could be done to help those on the 'waterfront.' Lack of stores and access to workshops were two of the areas tackled by the team. All year we have been looking at the best and easiest way to communicate with the engineering cadre and gain feedback. We soon recognised that for many the preferred 'weapon of choice' when it comes to communicating is social media and we needed a solution.

JUN
30

The planned road shows were completed, with a total of almost 1,200 engineers attending the presentations. To help us reach the greatest number of people, Faraday was included in a social media trial; JIVE. This is hosted on a secure 'server farm' and can be accessed from the Intranet and internet.

The Faraday JIVE community was established

and a steady increase in numbers and users has since continued. June also saw the arrival of two Lieutenants into the team, a MESM and the other a CIS to bolster the shortfalls in the Team's SQEP.

JUL
31

The SIP Team held a Rapid Improvement Event (RIE) in Devonport to understand the issues affecting the SM engineers on the 'waterfront'.

The event was supported by experts from Faslane. The issues raised were taken away by the team and were prioritised to establish solutions with a target date of September for a progress report.

On June 30 the Royal Navy Engineer Reserves branch was stood up. This allows people to seamlessly transfer into the Reserves on leaving the RN. This also provides the opportunity for former engineers to remain in contact and get involved as opportunities arise.

AUG
31

Streaming of the EGS cadre took place with Career Managers, who looked at everybody's preference and career history before allocating individuals into a specific stream.

As well as redesigning the ET, LET and POET career courses it made sense to look at the CPO and WO career courses as well.

The views of those who have attended CPO and WO career courses at HMS Sultan and Collingwood was sought, with opinions, recommendations and suggested changes being welcomed.

The target date for the roll-out of these new courses is late 2015. A dedicated Fast Track Career Manager was established to act as a focal point for questions and advice concerning FT.

Easier access to workshops in Devonport and Portsmouth was brokered by SIP, allowing suitably trained individuals to use the facilities ashore.

A series of CIS/WE integration road shows were undertaken. These benefited from the attendance on stage of Capt Annett and Capt Washer, the Branch Champions for the process.

As with all of our Road Shows, the debate and questioning was varied and passionate giving the team plenty to consider. The initial streaming lists were published as planned.

OCT
31

The RNTM on WE/CIS cross-training was released giving details of how and when the training would be delivered.

The number of people working on the training design work has now reached 30, a mixture of service, BFL and contractors.

Two contracts were issued for tender this month, the first was for a definitive statement of how an electronic Career Development Journal could be implemented which will identify any shortfalls in infrastructure and resource. The second contract was for the redesign of the CPO and WO career courses.

NOV
30

Following the final CIS/WE Road Show the team analysed the feedback received, with the latest guidance to be updated on the Faraday Defence Intranet site.

The streaming board was undertaken for those individuals who wished to be considered for an alternative stream and SIP announced that the trial it had instigated on HMS Northumberland looking at Safe Systems of Work had been viewed as a success.

This will allow the issue and control of Shiphaz to be passed to the nominated contractor to manage, reducing the workload of the T23 community during FTSPs.

DEC
31

The final streaming allocation details were published and the first steps to return this particular work stream back to the Branch managers as Business as Usual commenced.

The contract for the CPO and WO career courses was placed. On December 9 the Faraday and SIP enjoyed a well-earned Christmas lunch.

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Our home from home

AT PERROTT HILL boarding is a very popular option, particularly with those children who will go on to board at senior schools the length and breadth of the country.

Our caring, professional staff aim to make boarding fun, safe, rewarding and to provide opportunities for the children to develop independence and maturity.

It is a place where firm friendships are forged and where children are supported fully through emotional, physical and personal challenges.

The welfare of the boarders is a priority. The school recognises that all the pupils are individuals who have their own personalities and needs; we strive to make the pupils feel happy and special.

We have superb House Parents who are supported by a dedicated boarding team; this means that care is both consistent and continuous.

The concept of family and family values is integral to boarding at Perrott Hill and pupils feel welcomed and very much at home.

Boarders enjoy exeat weekends every three weeks; in between there are family Sundays when they may be taken to the nearby beach, Bristol Zoo, painting on Exmoor or to the local town for shopping, bowling or the cinema. There are also activity weekends, with themes such as circus skills, Hallowe'en and survival which take place twice a term.

Spring term open mornings are on January 23 and 24 2015 and Perrott Hill Scholarship Day is on February 6 2015.

Please contact Susan Cleary on 01460 72051 or admissions@perrotthill.com to arrange a visit or to request a scholarship information pack.

Tribute to school's fallen

A GROUP of pupils from the Royal Hospital School travelled to the original site of their school in Greenwich.

They took with them six oak boards naming 151 former pupils who attended the school between 1889 and 1918 and lost their lives during WW1.

The school party, dressed in their ceremonial Naval uniforms, paraded the boards to the Queen's House where a wreath was laid, followed by the *Last Post* and a two-minute silence.

The boards make up a former War Memorial measuring 13ft by 6ft, which originally hung in the Great Hall of the Queen's House, Greenwich, with the inscription *In Proud Memory of Those Old Boys who fell during the Great War, 1914-1918, Lest we Forget.*

They were brought to Suffolk in 1933 when the school relocated and were reused as honours boards

with the original names being hidden.

They were rediscovered in a disused garage at the school in December 2013 and, when the veneer was removed, the ghosted outlines of the names of the fallen were revealed.

Amongst the names on the boards, the youngest boy listed was Charles Ernest Timmins, a 14-year-old from Kent who was the bugler aboard HMS Cardiff.

Timmins lost his life in 1917 whilst alerting his ship's company during the battle at Heligoland. He was killed when a piece of shrapnel from a shell blew a hole in his ship's funnel and struck his bugle.

This bugle has been located on the Type 45 destroyer HMS Dragon and, in acknowledgement of this important historical link, the *Last Post* was sounded on board HMS Dragon at sea as RHS pupils played at the Queen's House in Greenwich and at the school in Suffolk.



● Pupils from the Royal Hospital School carry some of the boards to a ceremony at Greenwich

CCF are kept busy

IT HAS been an incredibly active six months for Trinity School's flourishing Combined Cadet Force.

With both Naval and Army sections, it operates from a dedicated facility in the school's grounds and plays a key role in the life of the school.

Over the summer, numerous cadets took part in a wide range of water and land-based activities, and developed important skills.

The headline achievement was that of the five students on board the yacht *Dasher* in the Tall Ship's Regatta, who crossed the finishing line off the Isle of Wight in overall second position out of 50 vessels.

Trinity CCF students enjoyed training at the CCF National Camp at HMS Bristol, as well as courses in first aid powerboating, ocean diving, and leadership.

The Remembrance season was particularly busy. Devon Royal British Legion held its Festival of Remembrance at the Great Hall of Exeter University and Trinity provided cadets to form part of the Muster.

On Remembrance Sunday there was a large turnout of Trinity cadets as Teignmouth held its Service at the War Memorial. They were then asked to provide a CCF Guard of Honour for the funeral of local resident, Fernand Raymond Davoult, who had been a Submariner in the Free French Navy during WW2.

Army training weekends away at Scaresdon, an MOD fort, and on Dartmoor, have covered general field skills as well as more specialised areas such as leadership and survival.

Trinity CCF have proved time and time again that they are at the leading edge when it comes to the training and development of young people.

Weekly boarding now offered



THE Duke of York's Royal Military School takes applications from any student aged 11 to 18 wishing to board with us as they study for their GCSEs and A-Levels.

From September 2015, we are pleased to offer the increased flexibility of weekly boarding as well as full boarding. This means that with parental permission, students can opt to go home most weekends after Saturday morning lessons and commitments. If they choose to stay at school, weekends will continue to be active of course.

Graded 'Good' in all categories by Ofsted, our students

performed exceptionally well in their GCSE exams last year which put us in the top 100 non-selective state schools in the country, as confirmed by David Laws MP in a letter sent to the Executive Principal.

Parents looking for an affordable quality education for their children can now take the opportunity to apply to us. As a state boarding school, your child's education is paid for by the state.

You will pay £3,665 per term (£10,995 per year) to cover the boarding costs. If you qualify for CEA, you will pay £366.50 per term.

We are extremely proud of our military ethos and traditions, and students enjoy ceremonial parades, Combined Cadet Force and a variety of sports and activities. Set in 150 acres of Kentish countryside, the school is ideally located for quick links to London and Europe.

The school's £24.9million building programme is now complete with a new sports hall and drama studio, teaching blocks and sixth form boarding.

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Deaths

Rear Admiral Geoff Marsh entered Dartmouth 1947 and served in HMS Indefatigable and Carron. In the 1950s he was a weapons engineer in the trials ship Girdle Ness when Seaslug was under test. As a commander 1966-71 he headed the project to develop a successor system, the Sea Dart missile which featured during the Falklands Conflict and the Gulf Wars; he conducted the first live firings from HMS Bristol for which he received the OBE in 1969. 1972-73 he served aboard HMS Norfolk and 1980-82 was captain of the RN Engineering College at Manadon. Promoted rear admiral 1982, Assistant Chief of Naval Staff (Operational Requirements), Deputy Controller of the Navy and Chief Naval Engineer Officer. 1987 accepted the post of NATO Frigate Replacement for the 90s (NFR90). October 24. Aged 85.

Cdr Toby Weston DSO, DSC. Entered Dartmouth 1937 and served in HMS Cornwall and Ramillies in the Med and HMS Norfolk during the Norwegian campaign before volunteering for submarines. His first submarine was HMS Otway, then P34 in the 'Fighting Tenth' flotilla based

in Malta; he became first lieutenant of HMS Una where he suffered sandfly fever and returned home. After completing his 'Perisher' 1942 he took command of H28 then commanded the new S-class submarine HMS Satyr, undertaking one patrol off Iceland before joining the 9th Submarine Flotilla based at Dundee. Over the next 18 months he undertook seven patrols off Norway, including rehearsals for the midget submarine raid on Tirpitz. In 1943, whilst on patrol off Stradtlundet, he saw a seaplane-carrier escorted by two destroyers, fired five torpedoes and was promptly depth-charged. Flooded aft, Satyr began to sink by the stern and despite frantic bailing struck the bottom at 350ft, where he stayed until he heard the ships move away. He ordered the main ballast tanks to be blown, but Satyr shot to the surface and was attacked by aircraft and shore batteries; they dived again and hit the bottom. At the third attempt he managed to level off and withdraw slowly towards Lerwick; he was awarded a DSC. Post-war he commanded the submarine HMS Aeneas, was second-in-command of HMS Kenya and Staff Officer Submarines

on the British Joint Services Mission in Washington DC. He retired 1959. September 28. Aged 95.

Lt Robert Aitken DSO. Joined the Royal Navy as a seaman and passed out of HMS King Alfred 1942 as top of his class. Volunteering for special duties he was told that he had volunteered to be a charioteer but was persuaded by the offer of leave to transfer to the slightly bigger X-craft. In 1943 he took part in Operation Source, the attack by six midget submarines on the German battleship Tirpitz in its heavily-protected anchorage at Altenfjord in northern Norway. He was one of two divers in the four-man crew of midget submarine X-7, commanded by Lt Godfrey Place, which was towed across the Norwegian Sea. X-7 dived into the wake of a German ship passing through a gate in the anti-submarine netting around Tirpitz but found itself in another net. The crew freed the craft and, although the gyrocompass and the trim pump were broken, managed to place explosives under Tirpitz. Returning to the open sea, X-7 snagged the nets again, alerting the Germans, who began to drop depth charges. X-7 bobbed to the surface, where bullets penetrated the ballast tanks;

Aitken slammed the hatch shut but the boat plunged to the bottom. The three survivors decided to attempt an escape using the breathing apparatus so flooded the boat to enable hatches to be opened, however, the batteries fused, giving off chlorine, and they had to start breathing oxygen earlier than planned. Aitken was picked up by a motorboat and held prisoner in Tirpitz, which had been severely damaged but was still afloat. He was interrogated and spent the rest of the war as a prisoner of war. He was awarded the DSO. October 22. Aged 91.

The Earl of Lisburne. A budding legal career was cut short by the outbreak of World War 2. Recruited into the Welsh Guards he served as an instructor. 1944 he was badly injured, falling under a landing craft while training for the D-Day landings; he recovered sufficiently to see action as a platoon commander in the North West Europe campaign and entered Brussels with the Guards Armoured Division in 1944. At the outset of the Korea conflict he was recruited by Naval Intelligence to join a small team of legal experts, thus serving as an officer in both the Army and Navy. September 2. Aged 96.

Samuel 'Sam' Pearson, Signalman. Served in HMS Woodpecker and Starling throughout the war in the North Atlantic and Arctic. Presented with Ushakov Medal by the Russian Ambassador in Manchester October 3. Ex-member of Captain Walker's Old Boys Association. November 6. Aged 94.

Charles Mandall, Engine Room Mechanician, 1946-58. Served in HMS Glendower, Imperieuse, Pembroke, Savage, Malaya, Suffolk, Asconia, Triumph, Bleasdale, Rocket, Victory, Daedalus, Drake, Wizard and Neptune. Received the RVM as a member of the crew towing the gun carriage at the funeral of King George VI. Member of the Wizard and Cadiz Associations and Littlehampton RNA. October 12. Aged 86.

Ronald 'Ron' Caine, PO Writer. Served HMS Saints 1958-60 commission and a member of the Association. Also served in Royalist, a light cruiser on loan to the RNZN. May.

John H Schiltz, AB. Joined the Royal Navy in 1953 at HMS Ganges then served on board HMS Indefatigable, Pembroke, Saintes 1958-60, Cambridge, Victory and Bellerophon. Left the RN in 1962. Member of the Saintes Association. October.

Charles Henry Wall, L/Sto. Served 1939 to 1946 in HMS Glasgow, Newfoundland, Keates and Glory. November 6. Aged 94.

Ted Hellings, L/Sto. Served in HMS Barle from build in Canada (1943) till ship was handed back to USA at end of World War 2. Served in Mediterranean and Pacific (Fleet Train). October 23.

ROYAL NAVAL ASSOCIATION
Derick Roberts Sto/Mech. Served 1945-53 in HMS Victorious, Belfast, Consort (Yangtse Incident), Rampura

and Cumberland. Member of Consort Association and Stourbridge RNA No 8 Area. November 9. Aged 86.

ASSOCIATION OF ROYAL NAVY OFFICERS

Lt Norman 'Jim' Enoksen. Joined HMS St Vincent 1958 11 entry Duncan 112 aged 15 and served HMS Dunkirk, Loch Lomond, Loch Alvie, Arethusa, Sea Lion, Otis and Onslaught. Retired 1993. Member of HMS St Vincent, Dunkirk, Arethusa and Weapon Mechs Association, also Diesel Boat Submariners, Submarine Officers Life Members Association and ARNO. October 17. Aged 71.

FLEET AIR ARM ASSOCIATION

David (H) Thomas Harding REA (A) 2. Served 1943-77. Joined at Raleigh, Daedalus, Condor, Ariel (Warrington), Siskin, Unicorn, Ocean, Ariel (Worthy Down), Gannet, Seahawk, Ark Royal, Fulmar, Centaur, Heron, President, Heron - 13 JSTU, Osprey, Victorious, Daedalus, GCA. Squadrons 810 NAS, 807 NAS. A founder member of the Gosport (Solent) Branch. November 2. Aged 87.

Brian Probert AM (E). Served 1946 – 48. Bristol & District Branch. November 3. Aged 87.

Leslie (Les) A Day LAM (A). Served 1945 – 53. Glory, Theseus, Hornbill, Fulmar, Peewit, Ariel. Essex Branch and Basildon RNA. November 7. Aged 87.

Graham A Burns POAM (E). Served 1947- 54. Royal Arthur, Fulmar (3MU, 4MU), Vulture, Triumph 13 CAG, Curlew, Heron, Unicorn AMD, Daedalus, Hornbill Bulk Fuel. Squadrons 766,796,827. NE Hants Branch. November 14. Aged 85.

SUBMARINERS ASSOCIATION

R L 'Bob' Cantley AB UC3. Submarine service 1954-60. Served in Aeneas Acheron Tapir, Tally-Ho. West of Scotland Branch. Aged 79.

P 'Pat' Cullum LME. Submarine service 1953-63. Served in Sleuth, Tactician, Thorough, Telemachus, Subtle, Trenchant, Tapir, Tabard. Australia Branch. Aged 81.

D J 'Dennis' Gittins LSM. Submarine service 1949-54. Served in Alderney, Turpin, Trespasser. Merseyside Branch. Aged 85.

J R 'John' Hopkins M(E)1. Submarine Service 1958-64. Served in Ambush, Toledo, Token. Sussex Branch. Aged 84.

P 'Sam' Serbert CC (EL(M)). Submarine service 1956-77. Served in Anchorite, Telemachus, Alaric, Dreadnought, Revenge, Courageous, Warspite. Eastern States Australia Branch. Aged 77.

R 'Reg' Stokoe AB TD3. Submarine service 1947-50. Served in Alliance, Trulent, Sentinal, Trump, Tradewind, Turpin. Royal Berks Branch. Aged 88.

P 'Paul' Whitfield RS. Submarine service 1958-72. Served in Scotsman (58-59), Alcide (60-62), Alliance (63-67), Onslaught (69-70). Dolphin Branch. Aged 76.

Ask Jack

Rowallan Division 1980/81: The previously advertised reunion (see <https://navynews.co.uk/forum/viewtopic.php?t=15&t=76045>) for the RN/RM Rowallan Division in Navy News has resulted in growing confidence that enough survivors of both the Leadership course and subsequent careers have contacted David Langley to make this reunion a distinct possibility. The intention now would be to meet early this year, and therefore David is repeating his request to all ex-Royal Naval Rowallan Cadets who have not yet contacted him to get in touch at the following address to obtain further information on venue and dates? Contact David at davidlangley634@gmail.com or tel 01625824942 or 07855468173.

Sports Lottery

Oct 11: £5,000 – AB H Bloomfield; £1,800 – PO K Rogers; £800 – AB M Penlington; £600 – Mne A Taylor; £500 – Capt G Tennant; £400 – PO C Aspin.

Oct 18: £5,000 – AB J Boles; £1,800 – CPO M Thornhill; £800 – WO1 D Cliff; £600 – Lt M Irwin; £500 – Lt M Proudman; £400 – AB S Maddocks.

Oct 25: £5,000 – Surg Lt E Maxwell; £1,800 – Sgt R Turnbull; £800 – WO1 P Summers; £600 – PO S Carr; £500 – AB2 S Watson; £400 – LH A Hughes.

Nov 1: £5,000 – AB1 M J Wood; £1,800 – Mne S F Billings; £800 – WO1 J Cole; £600 – Lt J K Griggs; £500 – Cpl M S Ford; £400 – AB1 M F Wilson.

Nov 8: £5,000 – L/Cpl D P Moran; £1,800 – Mne R Bevan; £800 – Sub Lt A P King; £600 – Cdr M Honnoraty; £500 – Lt Cdr J Fletcher; £400 – AB L M Harvey.

Nov 15: £5,000 – AB2 D Richardson; £1,800 – WO1 W Burt; £800 – Lt W Hooper; £600 – LH K Bennett; £500 – Sgt S Culkyn; £400 – CPO D Worley.

Nov 22: £5,000 – Lt B Purdue; £1,800 – AB2 K Wallis; £800 – Lt C Martin-Ortega; £600 – LH C Drake; £500 – AB1 L E Daubney; £400 – Cpl A Kendrick.

Nov 29: £5,000 – AB2 S Jones; £1,800 – WO1 Wright; £800 – PO M Seldon; £600 – Mne I Duncan; £500 – Mne J Cooper; £400 – AB2 J Lowndes.

Talking Navy News

Navy News is available free of charge as a digital file on memory stick or email from Portsmouth Area Talking News for those with difficulty reading normal type. Contact 023 9269 0851 and leave a message with a contact number, or email patn-rec@hotmail.com. A speaker that will take a USB plug is required but this can be obtained from the Talking News, or the file can be played back through a computer.

Promotions & Assignments

Lt Col E J Moorhouse RM as CO of RMR London from December 15.

Cdre W N Entwisle to be Principal Staff Officer to the Chief of the Defence Staff January 5.

Cdre G A Robinson to be Deputy Commander UK Maritime Forces from February.

Cdre M A W Bath to be Commodore Naval Personnel Strategy from January 5.

Brig R A Magowan to be Commanding Officer Joint Forces Intelligence Group from January 12.

Cdre J P Pentreath to be Commanding Officer RNAS Yeovilton from September 2015.

Capt I J Kennedy QHNS QARNNS to be promoted Commodore and to be Inspector General within Surgeon General's Department from February 9.

Competition

THE codename for the German invasion of Russia in June 1941 – the question in our November competition – was Barbarossa, and the winners of the *Battle Academy 2* war games were: Keith Clark, Lincolnshire; Mark O'Halloran, Somerset; Sid Myers, Devon; P R Jones, Devon; W Evans, Mid-Glamorgan; J H McCormack, Co Kerry; John Ramsbottom, West Yorkshire.



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Reunions

Devonport Command Field Gunners 1965: Will any members of the 1965 Devonport Field Gun Crew please contact Colin Burley at barbaraburley@hotmail.co.uk or tel 01543 572212 to receive an invite to the 50th anniversary reunion.

February 2015

HMS Diana Association: The reunion will be held from February 27 to March 1 at the Park House Hotel, Blackpool. If you have served onboard HMS Diana you are welcome to come along and join us and hopefully you will meet up with some of your old shipmates that you have served with. Please contact the Secretary, John Fisher, at johnjackie.fisher1@virginmedia.com or 01163678360 for booking forms.

April 2015

FAA Association: Reunion and AGM at the Aztec Hotel, Bristol, from April 10

to 13. Full entertainment programme will include trip to McArthur Glen shopping outlet in Swindon (Saturday) and a full-day tour to Bristol to include a river tour and entrance to SS Great Britain (disabled friendly). Serving, ex-members of the FAA or if you served with us are all welcome. Further details from Brian Bingham at brianbingham@sky.com or tel 01903 770295, and bookings to IOW Tours on 01983 405116.

Cockleshell Heroes: Dedication of a memorial seat and plaque to commemorate HMS Tuna, the Royal Marines and the French people who helped the marines will take place in the Allied Special Forces Memorial Grove at the National Memorial Arboretum, Alrewas, Staffordshire DE13 7AR on April 25. All welcome. Further information from the Project Manager, Mike Colton, secretary, Allied Special Forces Association at mikecolton@hotmail.com

or visit www.memorialgrove.org.uk or tel 07929 118598.

May 2015

HMS Cambrian Association: Our next reunion will be at the Royal Maritime Club, Portsmouth, from May 15 to 17. All crew members are welcome to attend. Any old shipmates not yet in touch should contact Don Macdonald on 01344 774386.

October 2015

HMS Lowestoft Association: The fifth annual reunion of the HMS Lowestoft Association will take place at the Royal Beach Hotel, St Helens Parade, Southsea PO4 0NR from October 9 to 11. All ex-Lowies 1961-1985 and guests are welcome. For booking and more information contact Ian Mckenzie at ian@hmslowestoft.co.uk or the website www.hmslowestoft.co.uk or IOW Tours at enquiries@iowtours.com or tel 01983 405116.

Entries for the Deaths and Reunions columns, and for Swap Drafts, in February's Noticeboard must be received by January 14

NOTICEBOARD ENTRIES

■ Notices for this page should be brief, clearly written or typed and addressed to – The Editor, Navy News, Navy Command, Leach Building, HMS Excellent, Portsmouth PO2 8BY, or email: edit@navynews.co.uk. If you are sending your notice via email, please include your full address and telephone number.

■ Reunions appear in date order, and requests to place an entry in a particular edition cannot be guaranteed.


■ Please send in Reunions at least two months (preferably three) before the month of the event.

■ There may be a delay before items appear, due to the volume of requests.

■ Entries are free to non-commercial organisations. Items pertaining to commercial work, books and publications for profit can only appear as paid-for advertising.

■ The Editor reserves the right to edit or refuse publication of submitted notices.

■ Space does not allow us to accept more than one free insert. Any subsequent notice will have to be paid for at advertising rates.



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Small sea with a big impact

THE Baltic has been the scene of much British maritime and Naval activity over the centuries.

The two battles of Copenhagen in 1801 and 1807 stand out (and are often confused), but less well known are the extended Naval deployments in the 17th, 18th and early 19th Centuries which saw admirals from Mountagu through Rooke and Norris to Saumarez using British Naval power, often with great subtlety and restraint, as a diplomatic bargaining chip to attain national strategic and economic objectives.

In an era when attention is turning back to the Baltic, writes Prof Eric Grove of Liverpool Hope University, it is timely that John Grainger, a well-known Naval author, has provided an account of British maritime and Naval activities in that sea.

The great strength of *The British Navy in the Baltic* (Boydell, £65 ISBN 978-1-84383-947-7) is that its author is fully aware of the complex cross-cutting political interests as littoral powers rose and fell, but the situation was underpinned by common mutual interests in maintaining trade, notably in the vital Naval stores that were the sinews of contemporary sea

power. Much of this involved little actual fighting which, as the author correctly argues, means that its significance has received insufficient appreciation.

The author has already published on the Russian War of 1854-56 and the book provides an excellent chapter on the key significance of the Baltic front which threatened the Russian empire at its heart. He provides an interesting and convincing analysis of how a purely 'Crimean' conflict would have been potentially indecisive and how the Baltic threat was developed as the key to Allied strategy.

This is a useful counterweight to the new critique of Baltic operations that is developing in certain quarters. As the author argues, it was perhaps best for Britain's reputation before the Russian capital did not get the treatment meted out to Copenhagen almost half a century before, the indiscriminate nature of which Grainger is highly – and perhaps rightly – critical.

There are, however, problems with the book. Readers might be put off by the early section which does not make the point clearly enough that the book is to emphasise the political and economic background to Naval activities. More importantly,

there is unnecessary material on general Naval development that can only be described as garbled. Nevertheless, there is interesting material even in this early section and, after about page 30, the book really begins to get going, maintaining a very high standard for the next 200.

There then ought to have been a section of the activities containing the Russians in the year after 1855, where the threat to Kronstadt and St Petersburg was manipulated to contain Russia in first the Balkans and then South Asia. A few pages on the forces gathered for the relevant 'Particular Service Squadrons' and their likely chances in the Baltic would have added interest and utility to the book.

Equally, the discussion of the deployment of Naval power in the Baltic, proposed and actual, in the early 20th Century is handled in a very cursory manner. In a way, the author could be subjected to his own criticism of too much concentration on actual combat, although his balanced analysis

THE GROVE REVIEW

of the significance of the British submarine deployments in the Baltic is fair enough.

The account of the intervention against the Bolsheviks is also sound enough, although it might have benefited from use of the unpublished inter-war staff history held in the Naval Historical Branch. The book therefore misses the interesting fact that the last Royal Navy casualties of the war against German forces were sustained in the Baltic in 1919.

Just as it started in a rather unsatisfactory way, the book tails off with no mention of RN Cold War intelligence-gathering activities in the region, using both fast surface craft and submarines. Enough is known about this now for at least a page or two. In fact, the book is rather dismissive and unsound on NATO's planning for the region the extent of which the author underestimates. This is a pity given the increased relevance of the Baltic.

It might also have helped if the author had used more fully the

analysis of 'gunboat diplomacy' developed by Sir James Cable, a source he mentions in his bibliography.

In his concluding paragraph, he confuses the gunboat diplomacy he has described so well with 'showing the flag'. Nevertheless, Grainger's emphasis on the historical background the diplomatic role of navies ('international engagement' to use the current doctrinal term) is sound enough and, despite its blemishes, the book should be required reading for those who seek to understand the wider forms of Naval power. As he puts it "real power is not displayed at sea by fighting or even winning battles," although a capacity to do so provides the vital underpinning of much Naval diplomacy.

For a book priced at £65 for 294 unillustrated – if nicely-presented – pages, one might have expected more and better maps. Many of the places mentioned do not appear on the three provided and there should have been charts of the movements and activities described in the text.

Nevertheless, overall the book is a highly-useful contribution to the literature of Naval history and maritime security. A revised and extended paperback edition would be most welcome.



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Among the recipients, Army officer Nick Metcalfe, decorated for his actions in Northern Ireland in the late 80s.

Now retired from soldiering, he's turned his attention to history, compiling the definitive reference work honouring fellow QGM holders.

Other than the award – and a common theme of saving life by risking their own – there is little connecting the 1,044 names in the resulting volume of more than 850 pages: *For Exemplary Bravery* (£54.99 *Writersworld*, ISBN 978-0-9572695-14.)

So recipients include Hong Kong fire-fighters, police officers who tackled violent criminals as well as ordinary men and women who achieved the extraordinary in the most trying of circumstances: the Piper Alpha disaster, an aircraft fire at Manchester airport, F1 driver Guy Edwards who helped pull Niki Lauda from his blazing car at the Nürburgring in 1976.

The major disasters are the exception, rather than the rule, here. Most QGMs have been awarded for incidents which briefly (and rightly) made the headlines, then faded into history, such as:

■ PO(ACMN) Jay O'Donnell rescuing 13 crew of the MSC Napoli in the Channel in January 2007 (you'll probably remember the widespread plundering when the ship's containers washed ashore);

■ PO Robert Eglinton who climbed up a 120ft crane in Devonport in June 1978 to successfully coax a distraught rating down;

■ PO(D) Michael Harrison, who dived on the wreck of HMS Coventry in the summer of 1983 to recover not just sensitive materials, but also the captain's ceremonial sword, telescope and the Cross of Nails from Coventry Cathedral;

■ C/Sgt Brian Johnston, killed in the Falklands in 1982 with the crew of his landing craft when it was bombed – but not before he'd rescued more than 100 men from crippled HMS Antelope.

The Royal Marines and HMS Bulwark keep the memory of C/Sgt Johnston and his crew alive to this day. Thanks to the efforts of Mr Metcalfe, the deeds of fellow QGM winners are instantly accessible in this very worthy tome.

The price tag may put off some readers – but you can shave a good 20 per cent off the price by looking around on the web.

IT'S not the ship, it's the people which matter.

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Without those scores or hundreds of men and women, all those thousands of tonnes of battleship grey really are quite useless.

But they're also quite interesting.

When the Type 45s began arriving on the scene late last decade, they drew crowds on their maiden appearance in Portsmouth. And they've drawn crowds whenever they've opened their gangways to the public – because people want to see what the inside of a £1bn warship looks like.

Thanks to the crowds such look arounds are pretty cursory – and you generally only get to see the hangar, wardroom and ops room.

For a more complete Type 45 experience you could join the Navy... or you could spend £21.99 on Prof Jonathan Gates' excellent *Type 45 Destroyer: Owners' Workshop Manual* (Haynes, ISBN 978-0-85733-2400).

Some volumes in the Haynes series are a little tongue in cheek, most are

practical. The guide to the 45 is about as comprehensive an insight into a 21st Century warship, how it was built, how its system works, how the crew operate it, how it fights as you are ever likely to find.

The road to the six ships now in service with the Fleet is long and bumpy: long because it started in 1978, when the first Type 42s, the 45s' predecessors, were only just entering front-line service.

And bumpy because between 42 and 45 there was 43 (a bit of a monster, cruiser-esque, bigger than Bristol or Daring, armed to the teeth, with a flight deck between fore and aft superstructures), 44 (a cheap sort of Type 22/42 hybrid) and the international Horizon frigate.

France and Italy stuck with Horizon (it's similar, though rather less elegant than a 45), while Britain decided to go its own way in 1999. It took four years to design the new class of ship, nearly six more before Daring was accepted into service (that's roughly half the time

it's taken to do the same for the Astute-class submarines...).

Pretty much every stage of the design and build process of HMS Daring and her five sisters was recorded – be it Computer-Aided Design plans or photographs of sections – and Prof Gates' has used these extensively in his handbook.

Indeed, the author and his team were evidently granted unparalleled access to the Type 45 programme: the 156-page book is packed with photographs, diagrams, graphics, charts and photographs into the inner workings of the ships.

So we can tell you that the destroyer's chilled water plant can produce 130,000 litres at 6.5°C every hour. Or that the sprinkler system in the magazines kicks in if the temperature rises above 60°C. And the cabinets which house the computing wizardry behind the RN's most advance warship date back to a design by the General Post Office's telecomms equipment in



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NAVY LISTS

NAVY LISTS 1827 to 2011. View online:
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PUBLIC NOTICE

Her Majesty's Seafarers' Welfare Fund

The Lord Mayor of Portsmouth, The Mayor of Gosport, The Public Trustee and the Administrative Committee of Her Majesty's Seafarers' Welfare Fund would like to take this opportunity to thank the public for their generous donations to this fund. The Administrative Committee met in October 2014 with the aim of reorganising the fund's trustees. It was unanimously agreed that the fund should be moved up, as there are no living dependants who would qualify to benefit.

After discussion, it was agreed the best course of action was to transfer the assets to a similar charitable trust in order to continue the good work for which this money was originally raised. The Trustees and the Administrative Committee passed a unanimous resolution to transfer the undistributed funds to the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity. This charity's potential recipients of funds are extremely similar to those of the Affirm Disaster Relief Fund, as well as it being extremely close to its aims and goals of providing assistance and reducing poverty to Naval widows. Any of the dependants of the dependants of the Affirm Disaster Relief Fund wishing to apply for funding will be able to apply for access to the funds subsequently lodged with the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity through direct application.

The Administrative Committee wish to reiterate that this is entirely separate from the 'Affirm Seafarers' Welfare Fund'.

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Osborne rows to victory

THE RN Indoor Rowing Championships held at HMS Temeraire attracted a total of 42 brave and intrepid rowers, keen to expose themselves to the demanding exertion required by maximal effort 2k and 500m races. Some also took part in the 4k relay team race.

The Blue Riband race distance is 2k and for the third year running LPT Ollie Osborne (HMS Richmond) was the fastest overall heavyweight (Hwt) with a time of 6 mins 15.3 secs.

His success followed a brief summer retirement, but he now seeks to knock off another 10 secs as he aspires to previous performance levels.

AET Emily Newton (HMS Sultan) was the fastest RN Woman Lightweight (Lwt), as she posted a time of 7 mins 34.5 secs, ahead of AET Naomi Fielder.

Lt Nick Howe (HMS Collingwood) was the fastest Men's Lwt with a time of 6 mins 55.3 secs.

The Naval Service has a very strong group of rowing age groupers in the 30+, 40+ and 50+ categories, many of these are highly-ranked nationally and internationally.

CPO Collin Leiba (MCTA, Mr Plymouth 1992) posted an exceptional time of 6 mins 36.2 secs to win the Men's 50+ Hwt, but with significant spare capacity.

Cpl Shaun Hickson (CHF) returned to competition after a period of hard graft deployed in Diego Garcia, to post a world class 6 mins 22.4 secs in the Men's 40+ Hwt. Both men are potential top performers at the World Championships in March.

Newcomers to 2k racing were welcomed, not least Lt Harry Morris (HMS Temeraire) who won the Men's 20+ Hwt with a raw 6 mins 24.2 secs.

LPT Izzy Molyneux-Jacob (HMS Nelson) nearly cracked the 8 mins barrier in the Women's 30+ Lwt.

Lt Cdr Jim Hyde (DES Bristol) realised months of structured training to record a personal best of 6 mins 27.5 secs (Men's Hwt 30+).

CPO Shaun Gibbs (HMS Sultan) was the fastest in the men's 500m with a time of one min 20.6 secs. AET Newton was fastest in the women's race with one min 43.5 secs.

The Royal Marines won the men's 4k relay with HMS Sultan taking the women's event.

Minibike's big noise

A SURVIVAL Equipment Instructor from the Royal Naval Air Engineering and Survival Equipment School at HMS Sultan is celebrating becoming the British indoor Minibike Stock Mod Supercross Champion.

POA(SE) Ashley Senior, 27, competed in the Stock Mod class of the MCF British Minibike Supercross at the International Dirt Bike Show, Stoneleigh.

In eight races across two days Ashley managed to accumulate five wins, two second places and a third place to clinch the overall title by a healthy margin.

"I started riding in the Minibike category around two years ago as it seemed a little bit cheaper to get into and competitions also ran on week nights," he said.

"In my first season I went from finishing seventh against 30 other riders in my first race to eventually winning in the last."

Quick to learn the ropes



● The new LPTs perform at their passing out at HMS Temeraire in Portsmouth

Picture: LA(PHOT) Nicky Wilson

A SPECTACULAR display of strength, courage and agility marked the end of a gruelling course which trains Royal Navy instructors in keeping sailors fit to fight.

Nine physical trainers marked their passing out in style at HMS Temeraire in Portsmouth – the Navy's School of Physical Training – in

front of 200 guests.

They have just completed the arduous six-month course and will now be dispersed among ships and shore establishments as Leading Physical Trainers.

Among the students was LPT Charlotte Mason, 21, who said: "The last few months

have been very demanding, both physically and mentally, but I can't wait to start in my new role."

The other students passing out were Michelle Mattinson, Mark Wright, Scott Jordan, Joel Kirby, Adam Scott, Fraser Bricknell, Jordan Bate, and Jo Nightingale.

Judo star picks up another top medal

A COMMONWEALTH gold medal-winning Royal Marine has been named Sportsman of the Year 2014 at the annual Royal Navy Sports Awards.

Fending off tough competition from fellow athletes, Mne Chris Sherrington now has another medal to add to his collection for his contribution to judo.

Mne Sherrington proved that he was one of the best judo players in the world when he took part in the London Olympics two years ago, but it was in this summer's Glasgow Commonwealth Games that he really had a chance to shine – winning a gold medal in the +100kg category.

He was presented with his award by Rear Admiral Jonathan Woodcock, who also presented trophies to the Best Sportswoman, Best Sports Official, and the Best Sports Team.

Receiving his award Mne Sherrington, 31, based at Commando Logistics Regiment in Barnstaple, said: "This is a truly monumental moment; to be named the Royal Navy's Sportsman of the Year is the greatest honour of my career."

WO John Thacker competed in the masters category and first fought for the Royal Navy

at the inter-Service championships in 1978. He said: "The idea of judo is that you use the opponent's power against himself. You don't stand like an oak tree in the wind but bend like a bamboo then strike back."

"To win a contest you need to score an Ippon; the equivalent of a knockout punch in boxing."

"This is achieved by throwing your opponent flat on their back, holding them down for 20 seconds or obtaining

a submission by applying an arm lock or strangle."

John took gold in the masters, silver in the under 100kg category and gold in the heavyweight masters.

Sub Lt Stephen Watson from Commando Helicopter Force (CHF), who won two golds, said: "It was a superb day for the RN judo team winning two out of the three team events. We definitely came away with more than our fair share of medals."



● Mne Chris Sherrington



● Lt Paula Bennett-Smith



● WO1 Paul Coleman

Sportswoman of the Year, Lt Paula Bennett-Smith, for her unfaltering commitment to Royal Navy Rugby Union (RNRU) over the past 15 years.

Working out of Navy Command Headquarters, in Portsmouth, she was one of the founder players of the RNRU and encourages more women to join the sport.

Sports Official of the Year was awarded to WO1 Paul Coleman for his contribution to the sport

of boxing over the past 30 years.

After 11 years as a boxer he hung up his gloves in 1995 to become a judge and is now qualified to officiate at international tournaments when he is not working on the new aircraft carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth.

Sports Team of the Year was the RN Triathlon Team who took top honours at the Inter-Service Championships this year for the first time since 1994.

Shorts

■ ROYAL Navy basketball players have been receiving top tips from the Plymouth Raiders.

The players attended coaching sessions to help the Plymouth Basketball Team prepare for a regional tournament.

Team manager POPT Joe Thornton said: "Having professional coaches volunteer their team for the benefit of the team has been a massive boost to basketball within the area and the Service alike."

Anyone interested in joining the team should contact their PT department.

■ A SAILOR from HMS Scott has earned a place in an international Rugby League squad.

AB (Sea) Samantha Alderson, HMS Scott's chief bosun's mate, has been selected to join the England Rugby League Elite Women's Squad for the qualifying internationals leading up to the Rugby League World Cup 2017. The first match will be against France next month.

■ THE Combined Services Cricket Coaching Association (CSSCA) will be holding a UKCC level 2 cricket coaching course at HMS Temeraire from February 1 to 6. Accommodation will be available at the base.

Anyone interested should contact Cdr Simon Morris at simon.morris542@mod.uk or 03067936199 or 967936199.

■ THE HMS Queen Elizabeth football team entered the Navy Cup for the first time and played their opening match against 43 Commando. The team is newly formed and were in high spirits, despite a defeat.

■ BOXER Dan Shannon made his debut for the Royal Navy at the Southern Counties boxing show at Portsmouth Guildhall.

He made it to the third round before being counted out against Bradley from Titchfield ABC.

■ A ROYAL Navy team won the 37th Challenge Cup – for the 24th time – against the United States Marine Corps in the Marine Corp Marathon in Washington.

Maj Finley Walls (CTG) finished as the first RN runner home, followed by Lt Alex Lockett (771 SAR) and L/Cpl Adam Stokes (40 Cdo).

Also recording respectable times were Maj Charlie Pennington (Fleet HQ), Maj Ryan Kestle (CTC), Sub Lt Natalie Wright (HMS Collingwood) and Lt Cdr Penny Armand-Smith (Fleet HQ).

■ THE Scottish governing body for shinty (Scots *Camanachd*) are hosting a training camp in Kinloss from February 26 to March 1.

The camp, which is open to experienced and new players, will provide an opportunity for the first inter-Service six-a-side shinty tournament.

Camans (sticks) will be provided at the camp.

Personnel interested in attending should contact Capt Stoddart, the club secretary at robertstoddart@hotmail.com or 01748 872470.

■ THE HMS Queen Elizabeth Touch Rugby team played their first-ever match against one of the ship's affiliations, Black Rock Investment Management.

After two matches the score board was level. It was the first match of a planned regular tournament between the ship and the company.

■ NAVAL personnel can gain free admission to all Western Football League matches thanks to the league sponsors Toolstation. For a list of the 41 clubs in Bristol, Dorset, Devon, Gloucestershire, Somerset and Wiltshire, visit www.toolstationleague.com

CRANKING IT UP AT SURF SCHOOL

ROB JOHNSON takes the speed line at Fistral Beach in Cornwall during a training session for the best surfers from the Royal Navy Royal Marines Surf Club.

Three-times British surfing champion Sam Lamiroy, pictured right, headed up the coaching team as the Navy's elite visited Newquay Activity Centre (NAC) in a bid to improve their surfing ability, style and technique.

The results came thick and fast off Fistral Beach – where the consistently great surfing waves are often referred to as cranking – despite some tricky conditions, with strong winds and choppy four-foot waves.

NAC director Rob Barber said: "It was great to see the Navy and Marines rise to the challenge."

"Each surfer received individual tuition within the group to achieve focused goals, our developer surf coaching packages really see results, with the video feedback and technique analysis offering surfers the chance to clean up their style and analyse the movements that will see their surfing step up to the next level."

Sam used the new iAM Bands 'Ability Measure' system to assess and categorise the ability level of each individual surfer.

This system is much like being awarded a specific coloured belt in karate or judo. But



instead of a belt, a coloured wrist band identifies each surfer's ability level.

"It's been really helpful to have fixed reference points and surfing milestones around which to structure my coaching," said Sam.

"By the end of the coaching session it felt like the surfers had a much clearer understanding of exactly where they are at in their surfing and what they need to achieve in order to step up their riding to the next level."

"It was great to see each surfer really engaging with the coaching and pushing themselves to get the most out of their performance – as a group they were a credit to the Navy and a joy to coach."

James Jervis of the RNRMSC said: "We all had a great training session with Sam Lamiroy and resident coach Jorin Massingham. Video analysis is a great tool for instruction and we have all benefitted greatly from advice from a professional surfer."

"The Navy surf club team is due to have their interclub champs next month and this training session will help those that attended to progress in and out of competitions and further their surfing standards."

For details of the Navy surfing club visit: <http://www.surfnavy.com> and for details of the NAC visit www.Newquayactivitycentre.co.uk



Perfect storm for victorious weather girl

A METEOROLOGIST from RNAS Culdrose brought home a full set of medals from the tri-Service Dinghy Sailing Gold Cup Championships.

LS Natalie Roach, who works in the Met Office at the Helston-based air station, won every one of the seven races during the Inter-Services Asymmetric Fleet Racing Championships.

The annual event was held at the Army Inshore Sail Training Centre based at Thorney Island. Seventeen boats competed in the Gold Cup; five from the Royal Navy, nine from the Army and three from the RAF.

Natalie, whose crew was PO Alex Pickles from RAF Marham, said: "We won seven out of the seven races over the weekend, but we were challenged all the way and had three of the other boats hot on our heels."

"As well as the seven medals, we won trophies for becoming the Inter-Services Champions, Royal Navy Champions and the first 2000 which is the type of boat we sailed in."



● PO Alex Pickles and LS Natalie Roach

The seven medals that Natalie won at the Navy Gold Cup were the icing on a very successful racing season.

"We have maintained our 100 per cent record for this season by winning this event, as we have won all of the Inter-Service level events this year. I am the captain of the Royal Navy Dinghy Sailing Team, so results like this help to keep that status."

As well as using her meteorological skills to forecast the weather for the aviation community at RNAS Culdrose, Natalie is also in the process of putting a winter training programme together so that she is ready for her next event – the Royal Navy Inter-Command Sailing Championships next month.

Too wavy for Navy on the Teifi

A SMALL Royal Navy team took to the water for both the Inter-Services Slalom and Wild Water Racing Championships at Llandysul in Wales.

The seven-strong side enjoyed mixed fortunes on the River Teifi in the slalom with notable performances by Lt Mark Wielopolski (HMS Caledonia) and ET(ME) Harmer (HMS Sultan) in the single kayak class, finishing ninth and 12th respectively. The duo finished third in the double canoe class.

In the team event the Navy A team managed to finish sixth with the B team seventh and in the women's single kayak class, Lt Cdr Charlie Jones (NCHQ) took sixth place.

Overall the Navy finished third to the Army and RAF.

The wild water competition, which consisted of a down-river 1km sprint, was made difficult by high water and waves, with many competitors struggling to keep their craft on the best line.

With no Royal Navy sprint specialists in attendance, the small team of five were always



● ET(ME) Harmer from HMS Sultan in action

going to struggle.

Again Lt Wielopolski led the Senior Service placings, finishing fifth.

OC James Browne (BRNC) took 15th spot, followed by CPO(ET) Patten (HMS Raleigh) in 18th place with Lt Cdr Jones finishing ninth in the women's event.

In a close team event, the RAF took the honours overall, narrowly beating the Army with 184 points to their 173. The Navy team came third, scoring 64.

Find out more about competitive kayaking in the Royal Navy and establishment club nights by visiting www.rnka.co.uk or join the RNKA Facebook group.



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